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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, Jr., a Senator from the State of Maine.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of all nations, Lord of all people, thank You for this land that has received Your blessings.

Lord, throughout our Nation's history, You have saved us from calamities. You have blessed us, even when we have failed to live up to our great heritage of freedom.

Today, empower our Senators to protect and guard the foundations of our liberty. Remind them that eternal vigilance continues to be the price we must pay for freedom. When our lawmakers are weary, replenish them with the inspiration of Your presence, as they remember Your promise never to forsake them. Bellow the flickering embers of their hearts until their lives are aglow with the fires of patriotism, vision, and hope.

We pray in Your marvelous Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, October 20, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, Jr., a Senator from the State of Maine, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. KING thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR EN BLOC

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand that there are six bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3005) establishing appropriate thresholds for certain budget points of order in the Senate, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 3006) to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to extend the discretionary spending limits for fiscal years 2022 through 2031.

A bill (S. 3007) to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to extend the discretionary spending limits.

A bill (S. 3008) to establish the Federal Rainy Day Fund to control emergency spending.

A bill (S. 3009) to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to remove the prohibition

on States and territories against lowering their taxes.

A bill (S. 3010) to cap noninterest Federal spending as a percentage of potential GDP to right-size the Government, grow the economy, and balance the budget.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you.

### FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, for over 240 years, the story of American democracy has been an inexorable march toward universal suffrage—toward the realization of that sacred principle that all citizens should have a voice in selecting their leaders.

The grand ideal had humble beginnings. At the time of the Constitution's ratification, hardly 1 in 10 Americans would have been even eligible to vote.

If you were not White, not a landowner, not a male, and not a Protestant, chances were that the democracy did not apply to you; chances were that you were cut out of the political process.

It took over two centuries of Americans marching, fighting, and dying for the promise of freedom to expand to our citizens, regardless of race or gender or creed, the right to vote.

But for every two steps forward, sometimes there are those who try to pull us one step back. Unfortunately, we find ourselves today in the midst of such a struggle.

Across the country, the Big Lie—the Big Lie—has spread like a cancer, as many States across the Nation have passed the most draconian restrictions against voting that we have seen in decades. If nothing is done, these laws will make it harder for millions of Americans to participate in their government.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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If there is anything worthy of the Senate's attention, if there is any issue that merits debate on this floor, it is protecting our democracy from the forces that are trying to unravel it from the inside out.

That is why this afternoon, the U.S. Senate will vote to begin debate on the Freedom to Vote Act.

The Freedom to Vote Act is a balanced, effective, and commonsense proposal that will fortify our democracy and protect Americans' right to vote. It sets basic standards for all Americans to vote safely and securely, no matter what ZIP Code they live in. It adopts proven reforms that will protect voters from both parties, whether they live in blue States or red States or purple States. It fights back against the power of dark money in politics and ends the toxic practice of partisan gerrymandering. And, all the while, it respects the rightful authority of States to carry out their elections.

At its core, the Freedom to Vote Act rests on a simple principle: Americans must be able to freely choose their leaders, and those leaders must be accountable to the people, not to well-heeled donors.

These are policies all Americans can get behind. When was the last time we heard Americans cheer about dark money in our elections or the pervasiveness of partisan gerrymandering? What sort of voter would willingly choose to make voting harder—arbitrarily harder—when it should be easy, safe, and secure? The Freedom to Vote Act would provide long-overdue remedies for all these concerns.

Now, crafting this bill, as you know, Mr. President, was no easy feat. It took months of hard work, compromise, and gathering feedback from experts on sensible policies that have been proven to work. I want to thank all of my colleagues who dedicated their energies to making this moment possible, and I want to especially thank Senator MANCHIN for his hard work over the past few weeks. He has reached across the aisle to try and find a way for the Senate to do its work in a bipartisan fashion. I thank him for his commitment to finding bipartisanship on a subject that, by all accounts, should be bipartisan to its core and has been for much of our history.

Now, today's vote is a cloture vote simply on a motion to proceed. It presents Senators with a simple question: Should the Senate even debate—debate—voting rights? That is what this is about, simply a debate and an important one to be sure.

No Republican is being asked to sign their name to this or that policy today, but they are being asked to come to the table and have a discussion and allow amendments. I want to be clear. If Republicans join us in proceeding to this bill, I am prepared to hold a full-fledged debate worthy of the U.S. Senate. The minority will have the chance to have their voices heard.

The Senate has already voted on more amendments than in any year

under former-President Trump, and on this legislation, again Republican Senators would be able to offer amendments. But for that to happen, we have to get on the bill today.

What we can't accept is a situation where one side is calling for bipartisan debate and bipartisan cooperation while the other refuses to even engage in a dialogue. If our Republican colleagues don't like our ideas, they have a responsibility to present their own. It is ludicrous for any Republican to assert that the Federal Government has no role to play in safeguarding elections when State laws disenfranchise American citizens.

I invite them to read the Constitution of the United States of America, which precisely empowers Congress to regulate the "times, places, and manners" of holding elections. I invite them to look at modern American history, when the Senate stepped into the breach numerous times when Jim Crow States sought to restrict the right to vote.

There is a long and hallowed tradition of the Senate, often in a bipartisan coalition, working to protect access to the franchise, and today our colleagues should vote to begin debate for how we can add to that legacy. But what Republicans should not do—they must not do—is squelch any chance—any chance—for the Senate to debate something as critical, as sacrosanct, as American as the right to vote. The clock is ticking on our chance to take meaningful action.

Our experiment in democracy has been the greatest feat of self-rule in all of modern history. We cannot allow it to backslide here in the 21st century. Today, we have a chance to begin debate on how we can prevent that from happening, but Republicans must join us in the debate and vote to allow debate to proceed. I urge my colleagues to vote yes.

#### BUILD BACK BETTER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on another matter, BBB, Build Back Better, even as we work to push legislation in defense of our democracy, Senate Democrats are also making good progress on reaching an agreement on President Biden's Build Back Better plan.

Yesterday, Senate Democrats had a very spirited and very positive caucus lunch to go over the latest outstanding items before we can all reach a deal. We walked out of that lunch united in our desire to reach an agreement this week. I believe we can get it done, and I want to thank all my colleagues for their leadership, diligence, and focus on reaching an end result. We are going to keep talking to each other all week long until we get the job done.

Later this morning, I will speak again with the Speaker and with the White House to go over the latest details of the President's proposal. I have spoken to the President just about

every day and Speaker PELOSI several times a day about these issues. I will continue meeting with my caucus to try and keep us all on the same page because be on the same page we must. Everyone is going to have to compromise if we are going to find that legislative sweet spot we can all get behind.

Nobody will get everything they want, but no matter what, our final proposal will deliver the core promise we made to the American people: We will take bold action against the climate crisis while creating millions of new, good-paying jobs; we will expand economic opportunity and lower costs for working Americans; and we will cut taxes for working and middle-class Americans while asking the wealthy to pay their fair share. In short, we will deliver on a bill that dramatically improves the lives of millions and millions and millions of American families.

We are getting closer to an agreement. We want to finalize a deal by the end of this week, but we all must keep moving together.

#### NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, and finally on nominations, yesterday, I was proud to announce my recommendation of a great New Yorker and a great friend to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, Nick Perry, of my hometown of Brooklyn. I cannot think of a better person to represent our country in Jamaica than Assemblyman Perry. If confirmed, he would be the first-ever Jamaican-born American to hold that post.

I always ask folks when I am in Brooklyn, "What is the biggest island in the Caribbean?" I tell them it is a trick question. They guess, "Well, maybe it is Haiti; maybe it is Barbados; maybe it is Cuba." I say, "No, it is Brooklyn," which has more Caribbean immigrants than anywhere else.

So Nick Perry's nomination is great news for our community and our country. For decades, Assemblyman Perry has served Brooklyn by doing things the old-fashioned way: working hard, never resting on his laurels, and earning the trust of the people he represents. He is a true American success story: an immigrant, a veteran of the Army, and a graduate of Brooklyn College. I know he will do excellent work as our next Ambassador.

From Patrick Ewing to KRS-One, from Vice President KAMALA HARRIS to Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE, to the late General Powell, Jamaican Americans hold a key place in our Nation's rich legacy. Nick Perry will continue adding to this legacy, as he has for decades, and I am proud to support him as a nominee for Ambassador.

And, finally, today, the Senate will also move forward on Catherine Lhamon to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the Department of Education. All her career, Ms. Lhamon has

been an unshakeable champion for civil rights and for all students who want a fair shake in their education. This would be the second time she serves as Assistant Secretary, so she has the experience, the leadership, and the dedication to stand up for students from all walks of life—something sorely lacking under the previous administration.

I look forward to confirming her nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### ENERGY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Federal Government's own analysts of the energy sector are predicting that this winter American families could face home heating bills that are 54 percent higher than last year—54 percent higher than just last year. On average, the price for our households running on natural gas is expected to jump 30 percent. For homes that use propane, a different assessment says the forecast looks like "propane-market Armageddon."

As the head of one aid organization put it, "After the beating that people have taken in the pandemic, it's like: What's next?" What is next? Well, astonishingly, what is next is yet another reckless taxing-and-spending spree from Washington Democrats, including more inflationary spending to push costs even higher and more anti-domestic-energy taxes and regulations that would only compound these problems.

That includes new, crushing taxes aimed at domestic natural gas production. They want to reprise the Obama administration's War on Coal. But this time the target is also—in addition to coal, the target is also the natural gas that provides electricity for our communities and heats families' homes. And then there are the new mandates and new penalties that are essentially designed to make 49 States' electrical grids move more in the direction of California's—paying higher costs for less reliable power.

Now, unfortunately, this has been the Biden administration's playbook going back to the very beginning. Remember, killing the Keystone XL Pipeline and thousands of American jobs was a day one—a day one—priority. Then it was

the ban on new development of domestic energy reserves and the hasty mission to rejoin the toothless Paris climate accords, where virtually nobody—nobody—but America seems to be remotely interested in achieving their nonbinding "commitments."

So for all the leftwing's apparent urgency to pass radical climate policy, they seem not to care much about tackling the biggest sources of the world's carbon emissions. The so-called international community that had scraped together the failed Paris deal could only get the world's most prolific polluter, that is, China, to agree—now, listen to this—to curb its increase in emissions 9 years from now. That is all they got out of China: an agreement to curb their emissions 9 years from now.

That is what this administration calls a good deal? America signs up for self-inflicted pain today, and China maybe—maybe—thinks about beginning to follow suit in another decade.

So, listen, China continues to produce more than one-fourth—one-fourth—of the world's carbon output, roughly 2½ times as much as the United States.

Instead of fighting back against our adversaries, Democrats' reckless taxing-and-spending spree would just hand-deliver them one big gift right after another, like the big new tax hikes on American businesses that would leave our industries paying higher tax rates than businesses in communist China; like doubling down on the anti-energy policies that already have the Biden administration going hat in hand to Russia and OPEC and begging them to up their own production for us.

As our colleague Senator BARRASSO pointed out yesterday, before the Biden administration took over, America was enjoying energy independence for the first time in seven decades. Before the Biden administration took over, America was enjoying energy independence for the first time in seven decades, but now, we are heading the other way. America has doubled our oil purchases from Russia on President Biden's watch. We are twice as dependent on Russian oil today as we were before this administration took power. And President Biden green-lighted Putin's new gas pipeline that will give Moscow even more leverage over the European continent.

So Democrats want our Nation on a path toward less energy independence and higher costs for working families. Their reckless taxing-and-spending spree would make it all dramatically worse.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, our country would be much better off if our Democratic colleagues shelved their radical wish list and focused on their fundamental responsibilities as a one-party government. But while they continue to spin

their wheels negotiating this reckless taxing-and-spending spree, their most basic jobs are being neglected.

This week, already months behind the usual pace, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee released partisan drafts of spending bills that are dead on arrival. They spend too much. They cut our longstanding taxpayer protections like the Hyde amendment. They shortchange our national defense even as we face serious and growing threats from terrorism and from major competitors like China and Russia. Most of these bills can't earn 50 votes, much less 60.

When Republicans ran the Senate, by this time of year, we had had bipartisan frameworks in hand for months, and we were hammering out the fine details across the aisle. Our Democratic colleagues are way, way behind schedule, with no solution in sight.

It is also looking increasingly likely that we will reach Veterans Day before the Senate takes up the National Defense Authorization Act—now, never mind that this year's bill earned overwhelming, bipartisan support in committee; never mind that it represents this body's single most important opportunity to influence national security. Our troops are being put in the back seat so the socialists can drive the car.

At the end of the month, because House liberals still cannot get their act together and pass the bipartisan infrastructure bill, which the Senate passed months ago, major highway projects and American workers are scheduled to be thrown into limbo.

Our Democratic colleagues have unified control of the government—unified control of the government. The country needs them to stop arguing among themselves over how to waste trillions of dollars and get about executing their most basic jobs.

#### VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on one final matter, later today, the Democratic leader will have the Senate vote on the latest iteration of his party's election takeover scheme.

Frankly, I have just about lost count of how many times our Democratic colleagues have tried to truss up the same takeover with new trappings. For multiple years running, Washington Democrats have offered a rotating merry-go-round of rationale to explain why they need to federalize voting laws and take over all of America's elections themselves, but every time they try this shtick in the Senate, it falls flat. Today will be no exception.

This latest umpteenth iteration is only a compromise in the sense that the left and the far left argued among themselves about exactly how much power to grab and in which areas. This latest bill still subjects popular, commonsense election integrity protections like voter ID to the whims of

Federal bureaucrats. It still sends government money to political campaigns—government money, taxpayers' money, to political campaigns, for goodness' sake. It still puts Washington in the middle of the States' redistricting decisions and on and on. The same rotten core is all still there.

The Senate knows how to make a law in a productive, bipartisan way. We have done it this year on multiple subjects. We have done it on election issues themselves in recent memory—the Help America Vote Act 20 years ago that Chris Dodd and I put together. We did that when there was an actual problem that needed solving and an actual bipartisan process. But as long as Senate Democrats remain fixated on their radical agenda, this body will continue to do the job the Framers assigned it and stop terrible ideas in their tracks.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Catherine Elizabeth Lhamon, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I know we are going to be voting soon, but I wanted to comment. I hope that Democrats and Republicans can rise above party to come together to protect our precious right to vote. I know, in Vermont, we do that. We make it very clear that voting is a right. Everybody can vote. We try to make it as clear and open as possible. People can be in jail for a crime; they still have a right to vote. We do not take it from anybody. You can vote right until the last minute. You can get absentee ballots. As a result, we have an overwhelming vote in Vermont—one of the highest percentages in the country.

Some suggest, well, you do it to favor one party or the other. I just point to the last election. The Governor and

Lieutenant Governor are elected separately in our State. We elected a Republican as Governor and a Democrat as Lieutenant Governor. It went back and forth like that all the way across the ballot.

It is just an example that we just want people to vote. And the timing right now couldn't be more urgent. In the wake of the Supreme Court's Shelby and Brnovich decisions, dozens of States are trying to restrict access to the ballot for tens of thousands of Americans, even millions of Americans—minority voters, the elderly, rural voters, student voters, the disabled, and others. These are the people we protect in my State.

The threats to the voting rights of any American are threats to all Americans. Indeed, they are threats to America, itself.

I am glad the Senate has taken much-needed action this week on the Freedom to Vote Act. It is a vital piece of legislation. It establishes common-sense rules of the road for voting procedures and ensures equal access to the ballot box for all Americans.

This bill is a compromise version of the original S. 1, and I note it reflects good faith efforts to broaden support for the legislation here in the Senate. I look forward to supporting this legislation on the floor. I can only hope it doesn't fall prey to the knee-jerk partisanship we have seen all too often lately in the Senate.

I am also proud to have recently introduced the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. That is a bill I have long championed and sponsored. This legislation would restore the core pillars of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that have been gutted by the Supreme Court's damaging and strange Shelby and Brnovich decisions.

But it also would provide critical protections to Native American communities across the country, including Alaska Native communities. This bill would fundamentally restore the Justice Department's powers to oversee and prevent harmful discriminatory changes to voting laws and procedures.

How can anybody stand up and say, "I am a proud American, but I am going to let some of these legislative bodies do things that will stop other Americans from voting"?

If you are a proud American and really mean it, then you want every single American—I don't care what their political party is, they should be able to vote.

I am working extremely hard to build bipartisan support for this bill, which—especially the past few Congresses—has been overwhelmingly bipartisan. I am optimistic we can arrive at a good bipartisan compromise that can serve as a starting point for continued bipartisan discussions here in the Senate.

You wouldn't know it if you listened to the partisan sound bites and Twitter wars in the modern media era, but this goal—protecting our right to vote—was never a partisan issue.

Our hero, a man I loved and was proud to serve with, John Lewis, once said:

We all know this is not a Democratic or Republican issue. It is an American one.

Well, truer words haven't been spoken. John Lewis was absolutely right. This is an American issue. If you believe in democracy, you believe in the right for everybody to vote. For those of us who run for elected office, I have always fought in Vermont to make sure everybody could vote, knowing that there were some sections of the State where there may be a majority voting against me. I have always insisted everybody be able to vote. That is democracy.

The core provisions of the act have been reauthorized five times—five times. Every single time it was with overwhelmingly bipartisan support in Congress. Republicans and Democrats alike voted for it. President Nixon, President Reagan, President George W. Bush proudly signed Voting Rights Act reauthorizations into law. Those Presidents—Presidents Nixon, Reagan, George W. Bush—spoke of the profound importance of the landmark law for our democracy.

In fact, just to show how it goes, the most recent Voting Rights Act reauthorization in 2006—you know what the vote was in the U.S. Senate: 98 to 0.

Some people feel we couldn't get a vote like that to say the sun rises in the East. But the fact is, every Republican, every Democrat said we need this to make sure Americans vote. It is not a case of saying Democrats vote or Republicans vote or Independents vote; it is Americans vote and we want all Americans to.

You know, the toxic partisanship of American politics today has sadly obscured what has united us across party lines for so long. The belief that protecting our right to vote—the very right that gives democracy its name—that is bigger than party or politics. It is the belief that a system of self-government—a government of, by, and for the people—is one that is worth preserving not only today, but for generations to come. It is the belief the government exists to serve the will of the people, not the other way around.

If I can just wear my hat as dean of the Senate—one who has been privileged to serve here all these years—I ask Senators, let's get back to doing things the way we have always done them: reaching across the aisle in good faith, meeting each other in the middle, legislate to protect the rights of the American people.

Even after all these years, I still have faith the Senate can serve as the conscience of the Nation. I believe it can shine a light on the path forward even on the most difficult, seemingly insurmountable issues. I believe we can do that again now on the fundamental issue of voting rights. So let's get to work. Our democracy—indeed our country as we know it—may very well depend upon it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last week, President Biden's Chief of Staff retweeted a tweet from Harvard economist Jason Furman describing our current economic challenges—notably, the growing inflation crisis and supply chain issues—as “high class problems.”

“High class problems.”

Well, I guess working Americans struggling to stretch their paychecks to cover increases in the price of everything from groceries to gas can comfort themselves with the knowledge that they are experiencing “high class problems.”

The White House Chief of Staff's tone-deaf tweet was, unfortunately, pretty typical of a White House that seems eager to minimize or disclaim responsibility for most of the problems occurring on its watch, whether it is the flood of illegal immigration across our southern border or the high prices Americans are currently facing.

But as the White House Chief of Staff and the President should know, inflation has become a serious problem for working Americans. Inflation, of course, hits middle- and low-income families hard.

If you are wealthy, price increases may be an annoyance, but they are not likely to break the budget. If you are living paycheck to paycheck, on the other hand, price increases may mean the difference between making it to the next paycheck or running out of money mid-month.

Currently, inflation is costing a typical household \$175 a month, and that is according to Moody's Analytics. That may not sound like much to a wealthy Democratic politician, but for an ordinary American family, it is a lot of money.

That \$175 a month may be the difference between whether or not parents can afford to get braces for their daughter. It may be the difference between going to visit family for Christmas or staying home and not seeing them. It may be the difference between having money for the extras, like family dinners at a restaurant or little league fees or ballet lessons or just being able to cover the bare necessities.

For families making less than the median U.S. income, \$100 or more a month can be the difference between making it to the next paycheck or running out of money. It can mean the dif-

ference between paying the heating bill or going cold during the winter.

Americans have seen increases in food prices and the price of bacon or beef or poultry, pork, peanut butter, fruits and vegetables, eggs, and the list goes on. The price of children's shoes is up. So is the price of furniture and gas and electricity and rent.

A recent AP article entitled “Winter heating bills set to jump as inflation hits home” noted “the U.S. Government said . . . it expects households to see their heating bills jump as much as 54 percent compared to last winter.”

Fifty-four percent.

Show me the working family that can easily absorb that increase. Inflation happens when you have too much money, too many dollars chasing too few of goods.

Democrats helped trigger our inflation situation earlier this year when they decided to pour a lot of unnecessary government money into the economy, despite being warned their partisan \$1.9 trillion spending bill could stoke inflation.

Now, with inflation clearly becoming a long-term problem, Democrats are preparing to double down on the government spending with a massive \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spending bill filled with priorities like \$200 million for a park in Speaker PELOSI's district—a park that features luxury housing and a golf course—and billions of dollars for a Civilian Climate Corps to provide government jobs for climate activists.

The massive government spending this bill—the biggest expansion of government, for sure, in decades, maybe in history—would authorize would pretty much guarantee that our country would be left with an even more persistent and widespread inflation problem.

Flooding the economy with government dollars isn't even the only way that the bill will contribute to inflation. The bill also contains big tax hikes on businesses, which are already raising prices thanks to the higher cost of shipping and materials and the challenges of hiring an adequate workforce. Raising taxes on those businesses could result in even higher consumer prices and/or reductions in the quality of services provided to consumers.

Government revenue for fiscal year 2021 saw a huge increase, driven in large part by tax receipts from corporations and well-off Americans. Those are the same companies and individuals the Democrats like to accuse of not paying their fair share.

But since Democrats' appetite for government spending is apparently insatiable, record-high government revenues don't look likely to stop them from passing their huge tax increases and driving up prices for consumers further.

Along with the flood of government spending Democrats passed in the spring, another major contributor to our inflation crisis has been supply chain bottlenecks. The White House

has largely failed to do anything to address the problem.

The President finally took one step forward when he announced the other day that the Port of Los Angeles will join the Port of Long Beach in operating 24/7.

Well, it is about time. Major ports around the globe already operate around the clock, but here in the United States, unions have largely stood in the way of round-the-clock operations. And even now, the Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach will not be fully 24/7 for a while. Only one of the container terminals is currently open around the clock, and then only for part of the week. The others are only slowly moving toward 24-hour operations with no deadline in sight.

Other than moving toward 24/7 operations in Los Angeles, however, the President is doing almost nothing to address the supply chain bottleneck. Infrastructure upgrades for ports, trucking, and rail are stuck in limbo while Democrats debate their \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spending spree.

And, while the President's Transportation Secretary has talked about loosening trucking regulations, his Department is actually pursuing an aggressive regulatory agenda that is likely to make transporting goods around this country more, not less, difficult.

And I don't even want to think about the transportation challenges that are likely to result from the government mandates and regulations that will emerge from the Democrats' \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spending spree.

It is unfortunate that Democrat elites cannot seem to grasp that inflation is a serious problem for working families and that the solution to our inflation problem is not to flood our economy with even more government money. If Democrats succeed in passing their reckless tax-and-spending spree, high inflation may be the order of the day for many, many days to come.

Let's hope that Democrats think better of their spending plans before American families end up paying the price.

I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 414, Catherine Elizabeth Lhamon, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education.

Charles E. Schumer, Mazie Hirono, Tammy Duckworth, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Benjamin L. Cardin, Angus S. King, Jr., Alex Padilla, Jeff Merkley, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tina

Smith, Jeanne Shaheen, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Catherine Elizabeth Lhamon, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 418 Ex.]

#### YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

#### NAYS—50

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeben	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

(Mr. KELLY assumed the Chair.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50.

The Senate being evenly divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative.

The motion is agreed to.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Madam President. It is good to see you here today.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Good to see you.

NOMINATION OF CATHERINE ELIZABETH LHAMON

Mrs. MURRAY. I come to the floor today to support strongly the confirmation of Catherine Lhamon to serve as Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the Department of Education.

She is extremely qualified for this role. In fact, she has served in it before. In 2013, Ms. Lhamon was confirmed to the same role by voice vote. During her past tenure, she demonstrated her commitment to students across the country as she worked to combat sexual assault on college campuses, protect

transgender students, reduce the use of seclusion and restraint, reduce disparities in school discipline based on a student's race or disability, and enforce civil rights laws to protect students.

Unfortunately, the previous administration took major steps backwards when it came to supporting and protecting students—for example, by significantly reducing efforts to enforce civil rights protections and rescinding important policies to address campus sexual assault.

Now, as we know, the pandemic has also done serious damage and worsened deep-seated inequities for students whose families earn low incomes, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities.

We have a lot of work ahead to fix this and help our schools rebuild stronger and fairer, which is why I am especially glad to see Secretary Cardona and President Biden working so hard to right the wrongs of the last administration and support our schools through this pandemic.

I know Ms. Lhamon will be a critical, capable partner in those efforts because not only did she tackle many of these challenges in her past service as Assistant Secretary, but even after her service in the Obama administration, Ms. Lhamon continued fighting for civil rights through her time as the Chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, her work litigating civil rights cases with the National Center for Youth Law, and as legal affairs secretary to the Governor of California.

She currently serves the Biden administration as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director to the Domestic Policy Council for Racial Justice and Equity.

Ms. Lhamon is a highly qualified nominee. She has a long track record that proves she is a champion for students through and through, and that is exactly what our students need. I am thrilled to have her returning to the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights. I urge all of our colleagues to join me in voting for her confirmation.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). The Senator from Kansas.

#### FIFA WORLD CUP

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I am joined on the floor today by my colleague from Missouri, Senator BLUNT, and we rise today to welcome the FIFA World Cup selection committee to Kansas City and to express our strong support for Kansas City's bid to serve as the 2026 World Cup host city.

I express my gratitude to the leadership of Mayor Quinton Lucas and to the leadership of Kathy Nelson from the Kansas City sporting authority, the president and CEO.

Our community, our joint community—Kansas City, people may know, is on two sides of the State line—the Missouri side of the State line and the Kansas side of the State line. Sometimes we are rivals, but in many in-

stances, we are allies and friends, and that is the circumstance we are here today.

Kansas City boasts a rich history of both professional and amateur sports. Kansas City is the home of the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame; the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum; as well as the 2020 Super Bowl champions, the Kansas City Chiefs; the 2015 World Series champions, the Kansas City Royals; and the two-time Major League Soccer Cup champions, Sporting KC. It is also the hometown of our world-renowned football coach, Ted Lasso.

Sporting KC has energized the region's diverse and passionate soccer fan base—a fan base that I am confident is ready to pack up their bags and head to Arrowhead Stadium, the loudest stadium in the world, to cheer on the U.S. men's national team and other nations that compete there.

Soccer has become an even larger part of the culture of Kansas City after U.S. Soccer's National Development Center officially opened in Kansas City, KS, in May of 2018. The NDC is the perfect location—the perfect location—for any team to recover, practice, and prepare for their upcoming matches.

Spanning more than 50 acres, this 81,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art practice, education, and medical facility includes three natural grass fields and two artificial turf fields, with a two-story coaching pavilion, and houses the Children's Mercy Sports Medicine Center.

Kansas City has been host to other major sporting events. The city regularly welcomes thousands and thousands of fans for events such as the Big 12 men's NCAA basketball championship and the NCAA March Madness and will be the location for the 2023 National Football League—the NFL—Draft.

Due to major investment in Kansas City's transportation and infrastructure—something that both Senator BLUNT and I and our colleagues, Senator HAWLEY and Senator MARSHALL, have worked on—Kansas City is well equipped to support soccer fans from around the globe. They will be welcomed at a brandnew Kansas City International Airport, which is currently undergoing a \$1.5 billion renovation restart for a state-of-the-art terminal that is scheduled to be completed in 2023.

In 2020, Kansas City also became the first major metropolitan area to offer bus transportation free of charge. Additionally, the Kansas City Streetcar offers free fares with stops just a short walk from many magnificent dining and dynamic entertaining experiences in Kansas City.

Early in my postcollege career, I had an office in downtown Kansas City. The circumstances of Kansas City today and that long time ago when I was a worker in downtown Kansas City are significantly different. The entertainment opportunities are immense—the

arrival of a major, magnificent Sprint Center; hotels, new, large, elegant—all have arrived in Kansas City in just the last few years.

I am confident the entire Kansas City region is ready to make the 2026 FIFA World Cup a resounding success and is excited to add this prestigious tournament to its sporting history.

Again, we welcome the World Cup selection committee to Kansas City today and to the State of Kansas and to the State of Missouri. We welcome them. They are being welcomed to a world-class city known for its heartland hospitality.

I yield to the Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to thank my good friend Senator MORAN for actually all he has done to try to make it possible to see the FIFA World Cup games come to Kansas City.

This is the biggest sporting event in the world. Frankly, soccer has become a bigger part of the entire American society. Kids are playing soccer out there before they can really focus on which way the soccer ball is supposed to go. There is maybe nothing more fun than watching the 3- and 4-year-old soccer match just to see what happens in that match. But around the world, it is important. It is important where Jerry and I live. Giant banners with the phrase “We Want the Cup” are proudly displayed on buildings. They are on the streetcar. They are everywhere you want to look. The Kansas City Chiefs’ quarterback, Patrick Mahomes, and the Royals’ catcher, Salvador Perez, are leading the charge to bring the World Cup to Kansas City.

There is no question that sports are a major part of where we live, professional and nonprofessional. The Women’s World Cup in 2019 was celebrated by fans watching games in the Power & Light District. They were broadcast on TV all over the world. Watching Kansas City fans watch the World Cup, we saw hundreds of thousands of fans flood the streets to join the Kansas City Royals in celebrating their World Series title in 2015. We saw an incredible crowd when the Kansas City Chiefs brought home the Lombardi Trophy in 2019. In 2023, Kansas City will host the NFL Draft.

So if our friends from the World Cup selection team are watching, there are others things that have happened to give evidence to the great sports heartbeat of Kansas City. There is plenty to look at and plenty to see. We have the infrastructure we think we need to meet that world sporting event.

Arrowhead Stadium, as Senator MORAN mentioned, is top notch. It is a great place for fans. It is a great place to feel the sense of the game and what can happen there. Local leaders have done everything they could, I think, to secure the right kind of practice fields, the right kind of facilities. Children’s Mercy Park would be one of those. In 2021, the Concacaf Gold Cup was hosted there.

Mayor Quinton Lucas is here today. In fact, he is here watching us today

from the Gallery. He is here advocating for all things Kansas City but is a particular advocate for seeing this world-class event come to Kansas City.

Location is another advantage we have. We are right in the middle of the country. We are close to the host cities in Canada and in Mexico that would be part of this event. I think we are better positioned than the other 16 cities to really move forward on this bid.

The new airport, as Senator MORAN mentioned, will be welcoming to whoever comes to this event if they come to Kansas City. They are going to be pleased with that facility.

There are lots of opportunities in Kansas City to spend your free time and enjoy what we get to enjoy all the time: the famous barbecue, the world-class museums, the Negro Leagues Museum in Kansas City, the Nelson-Atkins art gallery. There is really a vibrant nightlife and music scene in Kansas City today.

Nearby States have agreed that Kansas City is the right choice. It has become the Midwest choice for this event. In May, associations that represent 310,000 youth soccer players, coaches, and referees from the Midwest came together to endorse the Kansas City bid.

The financial benefits are obviously benefits that we would be excited about if we get a chance to host this. According to the Kansas City Sports Commission CEO and president, Kathy Nelson, the economic impact on the region could be up to \$1 billion.

With a rich sports culture, endless entertainment options, strong infrastructure, and an easily accessible central location in our country, Kansas City is the right choice for the 2026 FIFA World Cup host city, and Senator MORAN and I and our colleagues from Kansas and Missouri endorse this effort and are glad that the selection team is looking today at what they are going to get if they decide to come to Kansas City.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

#### ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, right now, the end of the pandemic may be—I underline “may be”—within our reach. The Delta surge is finally waning. Over the past month, coronavirus case numbers have fallen by more than 40 percent, thank goodness. The average number of daily vaccinations has increased by more than 25 percent—not an unrelated statistic—and COVID death rates are finally starting to decline. These are all promising developments, and they demonstrate that President Biden’s response to the coronavirus is working.

But as winter approaches, we need to ask ourselves a serious question: Will we continue to take the steps that are necessary to save lives and beat this virus once and for all? Or will we do nothing, as some of our Republican colleagues seem to urge, and allow the

pandemic to come roaring back for another deadly wave?

Millions of American families have already suffered the consequences of denial, deception, and inaction. A report released earlier this month found that since June—just since June—nearly 100,000 American lives could have been saved if there were more vaccinations. But we can save the next 100,000 lives in America if we rally behind the President’s call for his vaccination policy. The American people are already with him. The majority of people support mandating COVID-19 vaccinations for students 12 and up.

Business owners across the country have followed President Biden’s lead by instituting their own vaccine mandates. They have helped increase vaccination rates by more than 20 percent. In Texas, where the Governor is seeking to outlaw vaccine mandates, one hospital CEO said that requiring his workers to be vaccinated is “unequivocally . . . the best decision we ever made” and that 98 percent of his staff has now been vaccinated.

President Biden’s vaccine policy is supported by parents and business owners alike because they recognize a very simple truth: The only way to keep our kids in school, keep our economy on the road to recovery, and stop the spread of this deadly virus is vaccination. A do-nothing strategy is deadly and disastrous for our economy. Yet that is exactly what many of our Republican colleagues continue to propose that we do: nothing. It is the same response they had earlier this month when it came to raising the debt limit.

Let me reflect for a moment on the effort that is underway by State attorneys general. The Republican attorneys general across the United States represent 24 different States. They have threatened to file lawsuits to try to stop vaccine mandates and mask requirements.

I think it is fair to take a look at the period of June 15, 2021, to September 15, 2021, and ask how the States are doing represented by these attorneys general who are fighting President Biden’s coronavirus policy. Well, we took a look at the average of the 24 States that are threatening these lawsuits. Their infection rate is more than twice than all the other States’. So the people in their States where they are supposedly fighting for their well-being are losing when it comes to the infections of coronavirus.

How about the death rates? Of the 24 States in this period of time threatening lawsuits, we have a death rate almost three times the death rate in the other 26 States. The vaccination rate is lower in the 24 States represented by these Republican attorneys general.

So what are they winning? Some political war? What the heck difference does it make who wins a political war when we are talking about a life-and-death issue? And that is frankly what we are faced with.

When it comes to the debt limit, we see the same negative default approach



by the Republicans. Senate Republicans were ready to let go of the steering wheel and swerve into oncoming traffic with the debt limit. Right up until the eleventh hour, they wanted to use the filibuster to block Democrats from addressing the debt, the limit of the debt. Do you know when that debt was incurred? It was incurred during the Trump administration, with many of these same Republicans voting for the spending that stands behind it.

Now the minority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, has once again pledged that Republicans refuse to lift a finger to deal with the debt limit when it expires in the first week of December. Think for a moment what defaulting on the debt would mean to American families. It is fodder for even more inflation.

So don't come to the floor with your posing for Holy pictures on the issue of inflation and then turn around and say: I don't care what happens to the debt limit. Americans will pay more each month because of that for their mortgages and credit card bills and student and car loans. Fifteen trillion dollars in household wealth and retirement savings would be wiped out if Senator MCCONNELL and the Republicans have their way in the first week of December.

If our Republican colleagues are truly concerned about the economic well-being of America, work with us to put together a sensible response to the debt limit. Senator SCHUMER and the Democrats have said to the Republicans: If you won't lead, if you can't follow, then get the heck out of the way. Democrats, with a majority vote, will enact a new debt limit. We understand our responsibility to this Nation.

#### BUILD BACK BETTER

Mr. President, "denial," incidentally, seems to be the watchword on the Republican side. Certainly it is when it comes to climate change. Some of our Republican colleagues insist, despite all of the evidence, that climate change is a phony, fake news, a hoax. Others acknowledge it is real but say we just can't afford to do anything about it. In fact, what we can't afford to do is nothing. Climate change is here, and the cost of it is disastrous.

One in three Americans live in a county that has been hit by an extreme weather event this summer—one in three—with family homes consumed by wildfires, farms ravaged by unprecedented droughts, and lives lost in floods of Biblical proportion.

Last year, our Nation was hit by 18 climate disasters costing at least a billion dollars each—18. The total tab for climate-related disasters that year was \$95 billion. This year is worse. Remember Hurricane Ida? It caused \$100 billion in damages. Think about that. One storm: \$100 billion.

And don't believe that that is just a matter of private citizens contacting their insurance companies. You can bet that the Federal Government and many State and local governments will

be investing heavily to overcome the damage that has been done.

Climate change is the gravest threat to our economy, bar none—not to mention our children's and grandchildren's future. We have waited too long. Climate change must be addressed today. Tomorrow is too late. Delay and denial would not make it disappear. They will only increase the damage and lessen the opportunities for solutions that we might consider.

America is the world's can-do Nation. We are the Nation who looks at problems and says: We can fix it. And here is something that our Republican colleagues either don't get or won't admit: Dealing with climate change has the potential to be the biggest job creator in generations. We have an opportunity to put millions of Americans to work building a sustainable, resilient future for our country.

Let me give you a recent example from last week. I had a chance to meet with the public transit officials in Champaign-Urbana, IL. Of course, Champaign-Urbana, IL, is home to the University of Illinois. They were there to showcase a new zero-emissions bus and a charging infrastructure that is cutting edge. You see, these buses run on hydrogen fuel cells powered by solar energy. They will save tens of thousands of gallons of diesel fuel and prevent more than 130 tons of greenhouse gas emissions every single year.

Imagine if every city in America followed the lead of Champaign-Urbana, reconstructing their public transit system, making them sustainable and dependable. Think of all the Americans we could put to work assembling buses and trains, building charging stations, training workers to maintain and repair these fleets.

That is what President Biden's bipartisan infrastructure bill will help do. It is the largest infrastructure proposal in decades, and it will invest billions in green transit alone.

And, for the record, the previous President, Republican President Donald Trump, had no transportation package. He talked about it in the campaign, and for 4 straight years he delivered nothing.

President Biden's Build Back Better agenda is also an investment in our future. If you are worried about our worker shortage—and you should be—the Build Back Better plan will enable parents, especially mothers, to return to work by making safe and affordable childcare resources and senior care available for every family in this country. And it is a blueprint for America to win the 21st century and boost every family's economic security by investing in schools, education, and first-class job training.

Continuing to do nothing while China and our other competitors pass us by is a strategy for finishing in second place, which appears to be the Republican strategy. Our Republican colleagues say: We just can't afford to invest in America's workers, families, and eco-

nomics potential. Boy, are they wrong. What we can't afford is to do nothing—nothing.

That is what they did when it came to the American Rescue Plan. Not a single Republican would support our efforts for the American Rescue Plan to address the COVID-19 crisis.

The vaccination program, which has vaccinated most of Americans and continues to do even more, was funded by that program. Money was in that program to help businesses get back on their feet after the pandemic. It was a real investment in the future of America. Unfortunately, it did not have support from the other side of the aisle.

#### NOMINATION OF TANA LIN

Finally, Mr. President, on another matter, this week, the Senate is going to vote to confirm Tana Lin to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of the State of Washington.

Ms. Lin is an accomplished litigator whose credentials, skills, and decades of experience have prepared her for this assignment. If confirmed, she would be the first Asian American to serve on a Federal district court in the State of Washington.

She graduated from Cornell University and New York University School of Law and began her career here in DC as a public defender. She then continued defending the rights of the most vulnerable as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.

Following her time there, she moved to my home State of Illinois to work in the Chicago district office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She litigated cases under title VII of the Civil Rights Act, age discrimination cases, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Today, Ms. Lin works as an attorney in private practice, where she primarily litigates cases involving anti-trust, consumer protection, the environment, and labor and employment issues. And as a pro bono civil rights attorney, she has combated racial discrimination, advocated for religious accommodations in the workplace, and helped protect our elections from political interference.

Her nomination is another example of the Biden administration and Senate Democrats working together to advance highly qualified judicial nominees.

Ms. Lin received a unanimous—unanimous—rating of "well qualified" from the American Bar Association, and she has the strong support of her home State Senators, MURRAY and CANTWELL.

I urge my colleagues to support Ms. Lin's historic nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Alaska.

#### REMEMBERING CHUCK BUNDRANT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, this afternoon I come to the floor to recognize the life and the contributions



of a friend, an Alaskan, a gentleman: Chuck Bundrant. He was the founder and the majority owner of Trident Seafoods and a fisherman who really forever changed the seafood industry in Alaska.

Employing thousands of people across Alaska and the country and processing hundreds of millions of pounds of finished seafood products each year, Trident is the largest vertically integrated seafood harvesting and processing company in North America today.

The company—and, really, by extension, Chuck Bundrant—has been critical in giving the rest of the United States and the world a taste of Alaska's delicious and, of course, sustainably managed wild seafood.

Chuck has a pretty interesting story. He didn't grow up in Alaska. He didn't even grow up near the ocean. He was born in Tennessee. He was raised there and in Indiana. He had initially hoped to pursue veterinary medicine and enrolled in a pre-veterinary program at Middle Tennessee State University.

But by the winter of 1961—19 years old; he has \$80 in his pocket—he and a few friends drove from Tennessee to Seattle with the thought that they would make it up to Alaska. At that point in time, he didn't have any experience, any exposure to the State. Apparently, he had watched the John Wayne movie called "North to Alaska," and that kind of spurred him.

But he had heard that there were some pretty lucrative opportunities within the fishing industry, but he also knew that finding a job wasn't going to be an easy task. So, apparently, his buddies reconsidered the merits of the trip, but Chuck doubled down and continued on his way to the dream of working in The Last Frontier.

So, according to legend, he spent his first summer in the State working wherever he could in the Bristol Bay fishing industry, even sleeping under a boat on the docks. He eventually got a job busting freezers—which, for colleagues, means literally banging metal pans to knock loose the blocks of frozen shelled crab—and he was out on a floating processor anchored near Adak out in the Aleutians.

Like so many who have the chance to come and visit Alaska, Chuck wasn't satisfied with just one quick stint in the State. He turned his journey north into a 12-year learning experience—and, really, a lifelong business.

By 1965, he had worked his way up from the freezer hold to buying his first crab fishing boat. As Chuck gained more experience in and understanding of the crab fishery, he noticed that there was an inefficiency in the way that the industry operated. After bringing in the harvest, most fishermen would then head back to shore to hand it off to the shoreside processing outfits, where the crab meat would be removed from the shells and then sent to market. And just a lot of back and forth here meant that the fisherman

loses valuable time at sea. And this is where Chuck's ingenuity really struck.

In the early 1970s, he and two other crab fishermen, Kaare Ness and Mike Jacobson, used whatever collective earnings they had at that point in time and they built the *Billikin*, which was a 135-foot boat with both crab cookers and freezing equipment that allowed for immediate onboard processing. So this was new. This was novel at the time.

Chuck pushed on. He kept fishing and processing on the *Billikin*. There were protests from other Bering Sea crab fishermen who were in the middle of a strike to secure better prices from processors. Around this same time, he, Kaare, and Mike partnered with another individual, Edd Perry and his Bellingham-based company San Juan Seafoods. And this was, really, the beginning of Trident Seafoods in 1973.

Trident's early years coincided with a phaseout of foreign fleets from the North Pacific harvest due to the enactment in 1976 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act—we know it as the MSA—and, also, a burgeoning Japanese market for Alaska frozen fish, salmon, and her- ring. So Chuck and his colleagues took advantage of this opening. They built a fleet of mobile processing vessels that, really, very quickly made their mark on Alaska fisheries.

Chuck's competitive, resourceful mentality, again, proved useful as king crab numbers and harvest started to decline in the early 1980s. In the seventies, he had watched giant Japanese, Korean, and Norwegian trawling vessels rake in billions of pounds of pollock from the Bering Sea. And then with the enactment of the MSA in 1976, it extended U.S. fisheries jurisdiction to 200 miles offshore, giving American fishermen priority access to stocks of abundant fish, like pollock, that inhabited Alaska's coastal waters.

There was a significant market opportunity for pollock in Japan, but in America at the time, pollock was kind of considered a junk fish, a trash fish. And what is more, American boats and processors did not have the equipment to harvest pollock, to extract its roe that was very popular in Japan, and to transform its flesh into commonly consumed surimi paste and fillets.

But Chuck saw things with a vision. He saw this as an opportunity and not pollock as a trash or poor investment. He studied Japanese methods for catching and processing pollock. He strategized about how Trident could enter this market and, in 1981, he took a pretty bold move. He built a plant on a very remote Aleutian island, Akutan, for onshore processing of crab; salmon; and, of course, pollock.

So Chuck really took a risk there. He, after years of trying to convince food wholesalers and restaurant owners to take a chance on pollock, was able to secure a pretty pivotal deal between Trident and Long John Silver's. This was the first major contract to bring

the fish to U.S. market. And this deal didn't take place in some fancy restaurant in some major city. This deal took place out in Akutan—the Akutan processing facility that he had taken this chance on back in 1981.

So companies like McDonald's, Burger King soon followed Long John Silver's in replacing cod and whiting with very tasty, and now cheaper, pollock. And these companies have grown to become some of Trident's biggest customers. Odds are that if you have tried their fish and chips or fish sandwiches, you have probably tried Trident product.

Today, Seattle-based Trident operates a fleet of 40 vessels, including catcher processors, trawlers, crab boats, tenders and freighters; 11 processing plants in Alaska—so good jobs in Alaska—5 processing plants in Washington State, Georgia, and Minnesota. It offers a host of frozen, canned, smoked, and ready-to-eat seafood products; and its harvest-and-business model means they know exactly where its products come from. That is important to us.

But as Trident has grown and propelled the industry forward, Chuck remains steadfast in his commitment that Trident remain a family business that supports its employees and the independent fishermen that it partners with. Chuck's son Joe now serves as the company's CEO. He has continued his dad's efforts to seek out new value-added products that can be created from Alaska fish.

It is always a good story, I think, to know of these very successful businesses that keep grounded with the base from which they began; and with Chuck, it was really important that his family continued to be part of this success story.

I am told that Chuck had some pretty strict rules, that if any of his grandkids—and I think he has about 13 of them—if any of them decide that they want to work for the family business, you first have to earn a college degree, which Chuck did not have; but they also had to spend at least 4 years working someplace else other than Trident; and they had to have cut their teeth and fished at least two summers in Alaska.

So he wanted to make sure that you weren't just going to get the job just because you were a member of the family. You worked for it; you knew what this was all about.

It really is difficult to overstate the impact that Chuck has had on his fellow fishermen. Beyond the industry innovation that he drove, he always sought to pay it forward, to offer younger fishermen the same mentorship and support that allowed him to get his start in the 1960s and the seventies and to make Trident the company that it is today.

And this dovetails, really, with Chuck Bundrant's commitment to charitable giving. He was generous in so many, many different ways. He

raised and donated money for the victims of the Tohoku earthquake, the tsunami in Japan, Hurricane Katrina, Superstorm Sandy, and contributed to multiple cancer research foundations.

I have certainly seen his generosity as he has shared in ways that demonstrate his compassion, his care. His influence on the fishing community is really clear from the outpouring of love and support that he has received since he was diagnosed with an atypical form of Parkinson's.

In September of 2019, four of the captains from the TV show the "Deadliest Catch"—all of whom considered Chuck a mentor, a friend, and, really, an inspiration—co-hosted what they called Captains for a CURE fundraiser. It was an auction for the northwest chapter of the American Parkinson's Disease Association. They raised nearly \$380,000 at the event, and this money goes towards a Parkinson's disease research grant in Chuck's honor—again, trying to shine a light on the specific form of disease that Chuck lived with.

I received a note from Joe Bundrant on Sunday, when Chuck Bundrant passed from this Earth, and I wanted to share just a couple sentences from a personal email. He says:

Dying is not easy, but Chuck was up to the task and faced death on this earth as he faced rogue waves in Alaska: head-on with dignity, determination and with the faith that he would be safe in God's hands.

He goes on further to say that "he lived each day fully, driven by the values of integrity, loyalty, hard work and most importantly faith."

And so as I have reflected on the life of, really, an extraordinary man, it strikes me that, at the end of the day, this individual, Chuck Bundrant, was a family man, cared for his family deeply; but he, at the base of it, was a fisherman. And he lived his life in a way that really speaks to the values of integrity; loyalty; hard work; and, most importantly, faith.

To his family, to his wife Diane: Know that our hearts are with you. We thank you for sharing a truly honorable man with so many of us.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

HONORING OFFICER RYAN HAYWORTH

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, this weekend, thousands of law enforcement officers and their families came to our Nation's Capital to celebrate Police Weekend. And while Americans were paying tribute to our men and women in blue here in DC, North Carolina, once again, received the tragic news of a brave officer lost in the line of duty.

Officer Ryan Hayworth was only 23 years old. He had a bright and promising future ahead of him. He tragically lost his life on Sunday night, just 3 months after joining the Knightdale Police Department.

He and his training officer were investigating a single-vehicle incident on Interstate 540 when a drunk driver crashed into their parked SUV, taking Officer Hayworth's life.

Cody Hagler—his training officer—was seriously injured and remains hospitalized; but, thankfully, he is expected to recover.

This senseless tragedy is another reminder of the constant dangers our brave men and women in law enforcement face every single day. A routine call to respond to an accident resulted in a young officer losing his life in the line of duty.

Although he was only 23 years old, Officer Hayworth already had a distinguished record of service. He served in the U.S. Army, and then in the National Guard. And then he answered the call once again by becoming a police officer.

It is not surprising to anyone who knows the Hayworth family, though. Officer Hayworth's father was a long-time chief of the Zebulon Police Department, and his brother is a firefighter.

A member of his family church told a local news outlet:

He wanted to be a police officer like his dad. They're good, God-fearing people. They care about the community and it's sad something this tragic happened the way it did.

Knightdale Police Chief Lawrence Capps has noted the high standards Officer Hayworth met and exceeded as a new member of the force.

Police Chief Capps said:

When we hire police officers, we are looking for individuals that embody the best of this profession—all that is good, all that is wholesome, all that is pure, all that is righteous, and Ryan embodied those things.

It is no surprise to see the outpouring of support to honor Officer Hayworth. People from across the State have stopped by the Knightdale Police Department to place flowers at a memorial created by his colleagues. Other local police departments are now assisting the Knightdale Police Department in their patrols during this difficult time.

I am grateful that the vast majority of North Carolinians truly appreciate the service and the sacrifice of law enforcement. They recognize the men and women serving are good people who put their uniforms on every day and take extraordinary risks to protect others.

Officer Hayworth is an officer who took those risks to protect others, and he made the ultimate sacrifice in doing so. I know the community of Knightdale will never forget his service and sacrifice. And I know that all North Carolinians join me in keeping Officer Hayworth's loving family and his many friends and colleagues in our prayers.

May God bless Officer Ryan Hayworth and all of our Nation's brave law enforcement officers.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in supporting S. 2747, the Freedom to Vote Act; and S. 4, the John Lewis Voting

Rights Advancement Act; and S. 2615, the Right to Vote Act.

As some States and political operatives around the country seek to roll back voter protection laws and gerrymander voting districts, Congress must act to strengthen the freedom to vote and ensure elections are safe and accessible.

Since its original passage in 1965, the Voting Rights Act safeguarded the rights of historically marginalized voters at the polls.

Sadly, the U.S. Supreme Court's 2013 ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted key Voting Rights Act protections. Earlier this year, in July 2021, the Supreme Court issued another split ruling further weakening the law in its decision in *Brnovich v. DNC*, making it more difficult to challenge discriminatory voting laws under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Over the years, this democracy has seen a crisis in access to the polls, and it has been worsened recently as Republican-led State legislatures have implemented policies that disproportionately suppress the voting rights of people of color, the elderly, college students, and those living in rural areas, among others. Those same political operatives have repeatedly weaponized false claims of election fraud, like those perpetuated by former President Trump, to try to overturn the will of the people.

The right to vote is a fundamental right guaranteed by our Constitution and our desired responsibility to protect it. In the United States of America, a beacon of democracy, our elections must be open and transparent and follow a process and procedure that all Americans can trust. It is more important than ever for Congress to affirm that voters have a right to free and fair elections.

The Freedom to Vote Act fulfills this constitutional responsibility by improving access to the ballot, advancing commonsense election integrity reforms, and protecting our democracy from emerging threats from cyber attacks to misinformation bots. It is not the job of government to make it hard to vote; rather, it is our responsibility to balance the convenience of voters with the security of their ballots. This legislation does just that.

I also support the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which will repair the damage done by the Supreme Court's decisions by restoring the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division's oversight over historically discriminatory States when they change voting laws and legislative districts.

The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would provide needed Federal oversight and serve as a check on communities that have engaged in a pattern of restricting voting rights and making it harder for minority voters to be counted.

Finally, I support the Right to Vote Act, which would establish the first-

ever statutory right to vote in Federal elections, therefore allowing Americans to enforce that right by challenging in court any policy that restricts ballot access.

This legislation takes an enshrined right and empowers the people with the tools to defend it. This way, States attempting to restrict voting access will have to meet a high bar to justify any policy that makes it harder for U.S. citizens to participate in Federal elections.

Restricting the ability of Americans to freely and fairly cast their ballots threatens the very core of our Nation's founding democratic principles.

As Americans deal with the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and prepare for elections in the coming months and years, we should be removing—not adding—unnecessary barriers to voting.

While efforts to pass voting rights legislation have been stymied by Senate Republicans, you can be assured that I will continue to stand ready and willing to work with my colleagues in Congress to defend Americans' right to vote, end partisan gerrymandering, and prevent voter suppression.

The vote today will allow us to begin a much-needed debate on the topic of voting rights. I ask my Republican colleagues to come to the table and join us in this conversation about how we can protect our elections and safeguard American democracy.

I urge all my colleagues to support these important bills that would protect and advance voting rights in our country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2842

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, our Armed Forces have been asked to work miracles over the last 18 months, and they have performed. During a global pandemic, in the face of natural disasters, facing dangerous missions, our men and women in uniform have risen dutifully, faithfully to the challenge. Many of our servicemembers have contracted—and then recovered from—COVID-19 over the last 18 months. Now these same heroes are being placed in a corner by this administration.

President Biden's COVID-19 vaccine requirement for the Armed Forces does not grant our soldiers, sailors, and marines the respect they deserve, and it could pose a challenge to recruitment and even to military readiness.

This mandate, tied with President Biden's more sweeping general vaccine mandate, has put millions of Americans in difficult positions. In most cases, these are just everyday Americans. They are mothers and fathers,

husbands and wives just trying to put food on the table during what has, for many, been a difficult time.

These still unwritten but very much efficacious mandates are forcing millions of our fellow citizens into a sort of second-class, unemployable status, placing countless of our neighbors on the economic and social fringes of our society.

I have heard from almost 300 Utahans in recent days who were worried about losing their jobs due to the mandates. Some of these individuals are heroic members of our military. These servicemembers were rightly praised for serving during a pandemic and for dangerous missions, but now are being forced out, possibly with limited or no retirement benefits because of the President's mandate.

Let me just share with you a few of their stories. One soldier who reached out to me recently has served for 10 years in the military. He never received a single reprimand, whether written or verbal. He honorably and proudly served his Nation. He has been informed, despite his years of successful Active-Duty service, that he will not receive an honorable discharge if he doesn't comply with the vaccine requirement. Accordingly, he asked to resign from the military. His commanders made clear that he would be barred from resignation. Then he sought a personal religious exemption. He was summarily told that his exemption request would be denied.

Of his situation, he said:

To be backed into a corner with two very bad options is both disheartening and sad, especially with what I have sacrificed and what my family has sacrificed on behalf of the military.

Another soldier told me his story. He has been in the Army for 18 years. All along, he was planning on retiring upon reaching two decades of service. He is about 18 months shy of reaching that point—just 18 months from that retirement point that he has been working toward for nearly two decades. Now, because of the vaccine mandate, he is at risk of losing his benefits and not receiving an honorable discharge.

Regarding his situation, he said:

This will cause a substantial loss in pay and quality of life for myself and a large number of others I know.

A third soldier reached out to my office in a similar retirement situation. This soldier has children who experienced complications with receiving the vaccine. The soldier also has a child with significant learning disabilities, whom he is worried about providing for.

He said:

This really could be a life-changing event for my family, and I feel strongly enough about it that I will risk all my benefits not to take [the vaccine]. I just wish I had a choice.

Now, these stories just barely scratch the surface of the hundreds of stories that I have heard from people across my State, including many who are

servicemembers. These people, like millions of other Americans, deserve a better option. They have earned that. That is why, today, I am asking that the Senate pass my Respecting our Servicemembers Act. This bill would simply prohibit the Secretary of Defense from requiring COVID-19 vaccination for our military. I am grateful to my colleagues Senators BRAUN and TUBERVILLE for joining me as cosponsors.

This is now the seventh time I have come to the Senate floor, asking that the Federal Government take a more temperate, reasoned approach. As I have said each time before, I am not anti-vaccine. In fact, I believe the development of the COVID-19 vaccine is a miracle. I have been vaccinated, and I have encouraged every member of my family to be vaccinated, and they have done so. I think the vaccine is a good thing. These mandates are simply the wrong way of getting it done.

Look, when we look at the employer vaccine mandate generally, the President doesn't have the authority. In fact, the Federal Government doesn't have that authority. This is not a power that belongs to the Federal Government to begin with. You know, even if it did, we haven't authorized the President to do this unilaterally. Even if we had or even if we were now considering a measure that would give him that authority, it is worth noting here that there are so many other better, more reasoned ways to encourage vaccination.

That is why I am here today, and that is why I will be back for as long as it takes to address these mandates, which are causing pain and suffering to hard-working moms and dads who don't want to have to be making a gut-wrenching choice between, on the one hand, receiving medical treatment that they don't want, whether for religious reasons or a health-related reason related to what their doctors have advised them or some other compelling personal reason or otherwise—they shouldn't have to choose between receiving medical treatment they don't want and forfeiting their ability to put bread on the table for their children. It is un-American, it is unfair, and it is immoral.

So, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of S. 2842 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, in reserving my right to object, on August 24, the Secretary of Defense determined that the mandatory vaccination against COVID-19 was necessary to

protect the force and defend the American people.

Vaccination is not mandatory for any servicemember who has a legitimate medical or religious reason for not being vaccinated.

Mandatory vaccinations are limited to only FDA-approved vaccines. All FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines have been determined to be safe and effective.

According to press reports, as of October 4, Active-Duty vaccination rates are as follows: the Army, 81 percent; the Navy, 90 percent; the Air Force, 80.9 percent; and the Marine Corps, 76.5 percent.

Mandatory vaccination is not a new issue for military personnel. Mandatory vaccinations for critical illnesses are mission critical, and requiring vaccination is almost as old as the military itself. I can personally verify that point. Indeed, servicemembers are currently required to get 17 different vaccinations when they enter the military or before deploying overseas, including for measles, mumps, diphtheria, hepatitis, smallpox, and the flu.

We need a healthy and ready force. We saw what happened when Navy ships were contaminated with COVID. They weren't ready to deploy. They couldn't deploy. They were tied up. Their effectiveness and ability to defend the country were marginalized, to say the least. I think this is absolutely incongruent with the practice and mission of the military.

One other thing I would say is that one of the most fundamental ethics of the military is that every soldier, sailor, marine, airman, and guardian is prepared to sacrifice for their fellow servicemember, and the idea that one would put their own personal feelings ahead of the potential for contaminating or sickening another servicemember and affecting the unit is something that I don't think squares with the ethic of the U.S. military or the effectiveness of the force.

I agree with the Secretary of Defense; therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Thank you, Mr. President. I would ask the quorum call be vitiated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is not in a quorum call.

Mr. BENNET. For once, the Senate is not in a quorum call. It is amazing. We are having an actual debate. I can't believe it. It has been so long since that has been true.

#### FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I am here to talk about voting rights today, and I actually am delighted that you are in the Chair, my colleague from Colorado, because over many years you have had so much to do with the fact that Colorado has the second-highest turnout of any State in the country—76 percent—because of what we have done,

Republicans and Democrats and unaffiliated voters working together, to make sure that Coloradans can cast their ballots.

I am tired, as I am sure you are, of hearing our colleague from Minnesota come down here, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and say that Minnesota is No. 1 in voting, which they are. They have more than 76 percent of the people that vote, but I think we will catch them, and maybe we will catch them this year.

But the reason why we have such a high turnout is because of things that we have put in place working in a bipartisan way. And when the Presiding Officer was the Governor of Colorado, you know, that was when, really, we moved to the mail-in ballot system that we have, completely fraud free and a delight, especially for people living in rural areas, where it is hard to get to the ballot box sometimes.

And so thank you for helping create a model for the country as we debate this bill in front of us. In fact, much of what this bill does—I will get to the bill in a minute—is reflective of the work that we have done in Colorado.

Mr. President, you came here during a difficult time, I would say, for our democracy. This has been, in many ways, a near-death experience for the U.S. democracy. There are countries all over the world that are totalitarian societies who are counting on our country to fail. They tell us at the negotiating table every time we sit down with them that they think we are going to fail; that democracy isn't up to the challenges of the 21st century; that it doesn't move fast enough. This place doesn't move at all many weeks and could give a person reason to wonder whether or not we are going to make it work.

But in this year, we had a particularly savage experience on January 6, when the Capitol was invaded by our own citizens, and we were escorted off the floor of the Senate, taken to a secure facility, where I watched and the Presiding Officer watched what everybody in America saw, what everybody in the world saw, which were thousands of people streaming into this Capitol to try to stop the counting of the vote at the urging of then-President Trump.

And, fortunately, because there were enough people in this body who wanted to confirm the vote, on January 20, we actually had a peaceful transfer of power, and Joe Biden became the President of the United States.

Most countries that have a January 6 never survive to January 20, you know. And when I was a kid, it was common to see these kinds of things happen in other capitals around the world, places like Tehran. You never would have imagined it would happen here in Washington, DC.

And now it has happened here in Washington, DC. But the big difference is that because more people turned out to vote than at any time in our country's history, we had that peaceful transfer of power.

And now the question for all of us, I think, as Americans, is, What are we going to do with the gift that our fellow citizens have given us by turning out to vote in the midst of a pandemic in record number? What are we going to do with that gift they have given to us—a gift of democracy, I would say, a new lease on life.

And I think we have got a moral obligation to them and to our Nation's children and, frankly, to humanity to make sure that this democracy actually works for the American people and not for the special interests that have worked so hard to corrupt it.

And there are so many ways before January 6 that our democracy was being attacked: partisan gerrymandering all over the country to allow politicians to pick their voters rather than have voters pick their politicians. That is an incredibly undemocratic thing for us to be doing across the country; the special interests that lobby this place who are basically unregulated by any campaign finance laws; the effect of Citizens United, which was the Supreme Court's decision that opened the floodgates of billionaires funding American elections instead of people funding American elections; and now, perhaps most egregiously, because it is so strategic and it is so purposeful, the attack on the vote all over the United States of America.

I find it hard to believe. I am 54 years—56. That is the saddest story I have ever told. I am 56 years old, Mr. President. As you know, I went to college in the 1980s, you know, and now I am seeing laws passed that I read about in the 1980s that passed in the 1960s to try to deny people the right to vote all over the country, to make it harder to vote.

Just this year, 19 States have passed 33 laws undermining democracy; laws to make it harder to vote early or vote by mail, two things we treasure in the State of Colorado; laws to slash the number of drop boxes or put them in really inconvenient places so people can't vote, as I do every single election with a drop box just a few blocks from my house. It takes me 30 seconds to vote, completely fraud free. Everyone in America should have the benefit of that.

We have got a law that made it a crime in Georgia to give people water while they are waiting in line to vote.

So I know there is a tendency around this place sometimes to just think that our democracy, just because it has always been here, that it is always going to be around, to assume that we can coast on the blood and the sweat and the tears of Americans who came before us, who fought generation after generation after generation to make this country more democratic, more fair, and more free. This is not a time for coasting. This is a time for us to deal with the profound threat that is stealing the right of Americans all over this country to vote, to have their

voice heard, to be able to have a say in the direction of our democracy or whether we are going to have a democracy at all, whether we are going to accept the world where politicians, like the people in this body but at the State legislatures, can overturn the independent judgment of other parts of the election apparatus, people that held the line this year when somebody in the White House was trying to intimidate them to change their mind.

We have got people in this country, State legislators, who are passing laws that would allow them to do exactly what Donald Trump said he wanted them to do, which was overturn the election judgments of independently elected or appointed officials. That is something we cannot allow to have happen because the minute that does happen, you lose the democracy. The minute you cannot make a decision at the voting booth, at the voting box, at the poll, the minute you can no longer make a decision there that is held up no matter who wins and no matter who loses, that has the confidence of the American people, that is when you lose the democracy because the whole point of a democracy, the way we make decisions, is a peaceful transfer of power.

And in the absence of that very, very unusual aspect of our society compared to other societies around the world and the history of humanity, in the absence of that, what you confront is political violence like the violence that we saw on January 6, where people tried to take by force something that should have been decided and was decided at the ballot box.

And all of this, in my view, is why it is so important for us to pass the Freedom to Vote Act. The bill includes commonsense reforms that are broadly supported by the American people, and that is because they reflect common sense, just like the American people.

And we know these reforms work, Mr. President, because we have already passed them in Colorado, thanks in large part to your leadership. We banned partisan gerrymandering. We don't have it in our State.

So, again, politicians in Colorado don't have the right to choose who their voters are; voters get to choose who their elected leaders are.

We have automatic voter registration, as this bill has; early voting, so people have a chance to get off work and go to vote and don't have to just be there on election day.

Vote by mail, which I have to say, up until the last President's Presidency, there was no one in America that was concerned about vote by mail. We had cast millions of ballots in this country without a shred of fraud. Just ask the American Enterprise Institute. They are the ones that said you are more likely to get struck by lightning than participate in voter fraud by voting by mail. That is not a Democratic-leaning organization, as everybody on this floor knows.

Secure drop boxes in your neighborhood, where it takes 30 seconds to

vote—every time I go there, next to the Botanic Gardens in my neighborhood in Denver, and I drop my ballot off, I think about all the people all over this country in 2021 who don't have the simple ability to drop their ballot off in a ballot box, who are having to wait in line for hours for the privilege to vote just because of the State they live in.

We should have basic national standards for people. It is a civil rights issue. It is an issue that is fundamental to our democracy. And having a convenient ballot box is one of those things. Having mail-in ballots is one of those things. We have had zero fraud in our system.

And as I said earlier, in many ways, it is as important to rural Colorado as any other part of our State because the people live a long way from the ballot box.

If our State's history is any guide at all, we can do this in a bipartisan way. And it is not surprising to me that vast majorities of Americans, whether they are Republicans or Independents or Democrats, support the provisions that are in this bill by wide, wide margins.

I am going to be pleased to go back to Colorado and have the chance to tell them that we have banned dark money from our political system; that the Supreme Court's fundamental misunderstanding in *Citizens United*, where they completely misdefined the problem and failed to see the corruption of inaction that happens around here, the things that aren't done because of the dark money that is spent in our elections because—for fear that some billionaire is going to show up and throw what to them is nothing into a race that could determine the outcome of our elections.

We have got to change that, and the only way we can do that is by passing this bill. And I think that if we pass this bill, what we find is that States all over this country would see 76 percent of the people voting, just like in Colorado, instead of 50 percent of the people voting or 40 percent of the people voting. That would have a huge impact on what we are doing. We could show the world that we can actually compete with the communist government in China. We can resolve the question about whether democracy is up to this in the 21st century or not.

We could invest in the next generation of Americans. We could improve our schools, improve our roads and bridges, and invest in the future again, as so many generations of Americans have done in the past when they stood up for democracy and the next generation of Americans. That is the question that we are confronted with today as we take this vote.

Are we going to stand up for our democracy? Are we going to stand up for humanity, who is relying on us to deliver a democracy that works? And are we going to stand up for the next generation of Americans and remain a beacon to the rest of the world, committed to our highest ideals and not our worst instincts?

I think we have the chance today when we take this vote to follow generations of Americans who have, in their lives, lived out those best ideals, rather than caving into our worst instincts.

It seems to me—putting Democrats and Republicans aside—the question in front of us is: Are you for democracy or not? Are you for the freedom to vote or not? Are you for maximizing fraud-free elections, where people can actually turn out to vote no matter where they live? Or are you suppressing the vote of our fellow countrymen and women?

That is the question before us. And because it is such a clear question, I would urge every one of my colleagues, Republican or Democrat, to vote for this legislation so we can set a basic standard for what the freedom of vote should look like in the United States of America.

With that, Mr. President, I appreciate your indulgence and patience.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—our Nation was founded upon this set of inalienable rights that are provided to each one of us not by government, but by our Divine Creator who made us all equal. It is the role of the government to secure these blessings.

Regardless of our differences and disagreements, these principles outlined in our founding documents have always united us and made America exceptional. They are the framework of the American dream, the promise that through self-determination, hard work, and opportunity, we can all achieve a better life for ourselves and for our families.

Yet, whether you are pursuing a career, attending school, starting a business, or shopping for a dream home, DC politicians and government bureaucrats are increasingly dictating when you may exercise your rights and how you can live your life, and then spying on you to make sure that you are following the rules. This “Washington knows best” approach is negatively impacting nearly every aspect of your life, and you may not realize it.

To demonstrate the point, let's walk through a few common scenarios and the real-life consequences you could face as a result of the Biden administration's policies. For each, ask yourself: In this situation, is the government acting to secure or subvert your rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

You work hard and probably put some of your earnings away in a savings account to pay your monthly bills

or to be prepared for an unexpected emergency. And, folks, that is just a smart thing to do.

Well, if you deposit or withdraw more than \$10,000 over the course of a year, the Biden administration wants the IRS to be able to spy on you. To put this number into perspective, if you were renting an apartment in Iowa, the average annual cost to do so is just over \$10,000 per year. That is the threshold, folks.

Why does Washington even need to know this information about you?

The Treasury Department says this is necessary to make sure “the top one percent . . . can’t evade” paying taxes.

You heard that right. The Biden administration thinks you are rich if, over the course of an entire year, you either save or spend \$10,000. They might even have the IRS audit you for tax evasion.

Treating American citizens like criminal suspects for the innocent act of using a bank account is, quite frankly, un-American.

The Biden administration has been up front about its motive here. Washington Democrats are looking to collect as many tax dollars as possible to finance their never-ending reckless spending spree. And as a direct result of these budget busting bills, government inflation is driving up prices and limiting availability of everyday essentials.

Let’s take a look at life in Joe Biden’s America. The cost of food, the cost of rent, the cost of nearly everything just keeps going up and up. Meanwhile, the size of many products is shrinking, which means you have to work harder, pay more, and get a heck of a lot less. It is even costing more just to get to the grocery store. Gas is now more than \$3 a gallon, the highest price in 6 years. And this really shouldn’t come as a surprise.

Remember, on his first day on the job, President Biden signed an Executive order to end the Keystone XL Pipeline, killing thousands of jobs and limiting our access to oil and gas supplies. And while costs keep going up, just finding what you need or want has become yet another ordeal.

As a result of Biden bucks, which paid people not to work for most of the year, many products are in short supply or unavailable altogether. Shipping companies are even facing equipment shortages and, of course, they remain understaffed.

And, folks, this crisis isn’t ending anytime soon. The upcoming holiday season is already being referred to as “Biden’s Blue Christmas.” The White House is even warning there will be items people can’t get for Christmas. So let’s just hope for the sake of the kids who have been good all year that Biden’s broken supply chain problems don’t extend all the way to the North Pole.

And speaking of kids, let’s take a look at what might happen to parents who take a vocal role in their chil-

dren’s education. It is a good thing for parents to be active in their children’s education, and it comes as no surprise that they can often get very passionate about the subject.

So imagine going to a school board meeting and exercising your right to express your concerns about a new policy or proposed curriculum at your child’s school, but instead of having your issue addressed, you find yourself labeled as a domestic terrorist.

Yeah, folks, you heard that right—a domestic terrorist under investigation by our Nation’s chief law enforcement agency.

It sounds insane, right?

But it is a crazy reality today. President Biden’s Attorney General is mobilizing the FBI against parents who make their voices heard at school board meetings.

Let me be very clear about this. Violence or even threats of violence against school board members, teachers, or any public official should never ever be tolerated; but neither should threats of intimidation by the government to coerce parents to surrender control over their children’s education.

This is happening at the same time the FBI announced the largest spike in homicides ever recorded. I am not talking about this year, folks. I am not talking about last year, 4, 5, 6 years past. We are talking about the largest spike in homicides ever recorded.

With murder and violent crimes increasing, the President’s liberal allies in Congress are threatening to defund the police. That approach certainly is not going to secure life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness.

Folks, all of these disturbing trends we just talked about are stark reminders that the principles our Nation was founded upon are not guaranteed. Every generation of Americans owes it to the next generation to preserve and strengthen the blessings of liberty we were fortunate enough to inherit.

I’d expect government coercion, State snooping, empty shelves, and out-of-control inflation in nations with socialist regimes, like China, Cuba, and Venezuela. But regardless of who our President may be, we must never ever accept any of these as part of life in America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes on the matter at hand.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak in support of what is right before us right now, and that is, proceeding to debate legislation that is critical to our democracy, the Freedom to Vote Act, which I introduced with the members of the voting rights working group assembled by Leader SCHUMER. That would be Senators MANCHIN, MERKLEY, PADILLA,

KING, KAINE, TESTER, and WARNOCK. We all have our names on this bill. We all feel very strongly about this bill. Why? Because the freedom to vote is fundamental to all of our freedoms, and it is currently under attack.

Since the 2020 elections, we have seen a persistent and coordinated assault on the freedom to vote, but it has been under attack for much longer, as States have closed polling locations on a massive scale and purged hundreds of thousands of voters from the rolls.

As foreign adversaries have actually attempted to interfere in our elections, these attacks on our democracy demand a Federal response. When you have one State attacked by a foreign adversary, when they try to get into voter rolls in Illinois or Hawaii, are we going to expect those States to respond on their own? When you have an assault, a coordinated assault, on voting rights, so you have similar bills introduced across the country to limit drop-off boxes; when you have coordinated attacks to limit vote-by-mail; when you have coordinated attacks to limit registration to vote, it demands a Federal response.

What is amazing about our Constitution is that the Founding Fathers anticipated this because right in the Constitution, it says that Congress—this place where we work—can make and alter the laws regarding Federal elections. It is bulletproof. It has been upheld time and time again.

The urgent need for action could not be more serious. With over 400 bills having been introduced in nearly every State to limit the freedom to vote—over 30 of those have been signed into law—with redistricting underway to draw congressional maps that will define our democracy for the next decade—and the first primary for the 2022 elections is in a little over 4 months in Texas—we must act now.

It has been over 9 months since that violent mob of insurrectionists stormed into this Chamber, opened up people’s desks, and sat where the Presiding Officer is sitting right now. They desecrated our Capitol, the temple of our democracy. This was not just an attack on a building. It was an attack on our Republic. It was an attack on public servants, police officers who were serving us that day.

As I said from the inaugural stage just 2 weeks later under that beautiful blue sky at the very place where you could still see the spray paint on the columns, where we stood in front of makeshift windows—where we stood together, leaders of both political parties in both Chambers and from across the Nation—I said: This is the day our democracy picks itself up, brushes itself off, and does what America always does—goes forward as one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

We took back our democracy that day. With this Freedom to Vote Act, which includes provisions that have the support of 78 percent of Americans



who favor 2 weeks of early voting and 83 percent of voters who support public disclosure of campaign contributions because they believe the people should be running the government, not lobbyists and not outside groups, we will take it back again from those who are trying to take away the people's constitutional right to vote.

With 19 States having enacted laws this year to roll back the freedom to vote, we can't simply sit back and watch our democracy be threatened. Whether it be threatened with bear spray, crowbars, axes, or whether it be threatened with long lines, no ballot drop-off boxes, and secret money, we must stand up for our democracy whether we are Democrats or Republicans or Independents. That is what our country is about.

When we are faced with a coordinated effort across our country to limit the freedom to vote, we must stand up and do what is right. But, as we have seen in States like Georgia and Florida and Iowa and Montana and last month in Texas, we are up against a coordinated attack. As Senator Reverend RAPHAEL WARNOCK has said, it is really quite simple: Some people don't want some people to vote. That is what this is about.

What is this Freedom to Vote Act about? It is about minimum standards for voting. You know, it is 15 days of early voting. My State votes up to 40 days. That is not what we put in this bill. We put minimum standards in this bill, ensuring voters have access to at least 2 weeks of early voting so they can cast their mail-in ballot without an excuse—something people were able to use as a way to safely vote in the middle of a public health crisis. They did it in record numbers in the middle of a crisis because they believed in our democracy no matter which way they voted. Why would we take away that right from them now when we are seeing a curtailing of that right in many States across this country?

It counters partisan interference in election administrations, makes sure that these super PACs and issue advocacy groups that hide behind veils have to show who is giving them the money, and prohibits partisan gerrymandering.

Then we listened to secretaries of state across this country, Democrats and Republicans. We listened to our colleague Senator MANCHIN, who proudly has his name on this bill. So what did we do? We made changes to this bill. It provides flexibility for small and vote-by-mail jurisdictions on early voting. It makes it easier to implement automatic voter registration. It creates a new flexible source of Federal funding to help our States. It ensures election officials can use best practices for maintaining accurate and up-to-date voter rolls.

It is important to recognize that the Freedom to Vote Act is the first piece of voting rights legislation this Congress to come to the Senate floor with the support of all 50 Senate Democrats.

Now, our Republican colleagues may not agree with everything in this bill. OK. Then don't be scared. Don't hide behind your desks. Don't deny us the right to simply debate this bill. Our leader, Senator SCHUMER, has made it very clear: We are open to amendments on this bill. We welcome your amendments. We are not putting a limit on amendments.

So why would you shy away from debating this bill—unless you just don't want the American people to hear the truth; unless you don't want the stories told about what is going on in places like Georgia, where voters are now being asked to put their birth date on the outside of the inside envelope. Maybe you don't want to have the stories told about how voters in Wisconsin almost—except for the Governor stopping it in its tracks, voters in Wisconsin almost were limited in the entire city of Milwaukee to one drop-off box. That bill passed their legislature. That is what we are talking about here.

So let's have this debate. Let's hear the argument. Let's not stop the debate over the fundamental right to vote that our entire democracy is founded on.

If our Republican colleagues have constructive ideas on ways to improve this legislation and if they are willing to work with us on amendments, then we are prepared to hear them. We are simply asking them to open up the debate. Instead, it will be more people standing in line, like they did in Wisconsin in the primary, in homemade masks and garbage bags in a rainstorm just to exercise their right to vote. It is going to be people who are told, like they just were in Georgia: You can't even vote on weekends in the runoff period. It is going to be people who served in our military who have to wait in line in the hot Sun, wait for hours to vote. That didn't happen when they signed up to serve our country, but it happens when they try to vote.

Let's have that debate. Americans have fought and died to protect our freedom to vote. They have done so on the battlefield, and they did so in marches during the civil rights movement. Fifty-six years after the Voting Rights Act was passed by this Chamber and signed into law, we cannot shut down the debate.

Our Nation was founded on the ideals of democracy, and we have seen for ourselves in this very building that we can't afford to take that for granted. We can't do it when legislators and Members of Congress get to pick and choose who is going to be able to vote easily. We do it by debating real ideas and standing on the shoulders of those who went out to vote. That is what a democracy is about.

I urge my colleagues to open up the debate, to not be afraid and shut down the debate, to not hide under their desks, to not put their heads down. I urge them to simply open up the debate.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON LHAMON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lhamon nomination?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 419 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—50

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50.

The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the nomination is confirmed.

The nomination was confirmed.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The VICE PRESIDENT. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 125, S. 2747, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box and reduce the influence of big money in politics, and for other purpose.

Charles E. Schumer, Amy Klobuchar, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan,



Raphael G. Warnock, Ben Ray Lujan, Gary C. Peters, Elizabeth Warren, Christopher Murphy, Tammy Duckworth, Patrick J. Leahy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Michael F. Bennet, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Cory A. Booker, Sherrod Brown.

The VICE PRESIDENT. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed on S. 2747, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box and reduce the influence of big money in politics, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 420 Ex.]

#### YEAS—49

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	
Heinrich	Peters	

#### NAYS—51

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Schumer
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Shelby
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Tuberville
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Fischer	Paul	Young

Mr. SCHUMER. I change my vote to no.

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 51.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

#### MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the failed cloture vote.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The motion is entered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Madam President, I want to be clear about what just happened on the floor of the Senate. Every single Republican Senator just blocked this Chamber from having a debate—simply a debate—on protecting Americans' right to vote in free and fair elections.

A little over a year ago, our country held the safest, most accessible, most

on-the-level elections in modern history. Our former President could not accept defeat with grace. He refused to show fidelity to the democratic process.

Instead, he told a Big Lie—a Big Lie that has now poisoned—poisoned—the roots of our democracy. Capitalizing on this malicious lie, his acolytes in conservative-controlled legislatures are now passing laws across the country making it harder for younger, poorer, urban, and non-White Americans to participate in our elections.

These laws are a direct attack on our fundamental liberties as American citizens. If there is anything—anything—worthy of the Senate's attention, it is unquestionably this.

And yet, given the chance to respond to an obvious problem, given the chance to merely debate these latest threats against the franchise, Senate Republicans voted unanimously—unanimously—to block any opportunity for action.

Let there be no mistake, Senate Republicans blocking debate today is an implicit endorsement of the horrid new voter suppression and election subversion laws pushed in conservative States across the country. By preventing the Senate from functioning as it was intended, Republicans in this body are permitting States to criminalize giving food and water to voters at the polls. Republicans are saying it's OK to limit polling places and voting hours and shut the doors to more expansive vote by mail.

I mean, my God. Why aren't all of my colleagues outraged by these laws?

Frankly, we haven't heard a clear explanation from Republicans at all because they refused for this Chamber to even hold a debate. It is ludicrous—ludicrous—for them to simply state that the Federal Government has no role to play here. They should read the Constitution of these United States of America. It precisely empowers Congress to regulate the “times, places, and manners” of holding elections. The Congress—us. Sometimes the Federal Government has been the only recourse when States conspire to shut voters out.

Madam President, the fight to protect our democracy is far from over in the United States Senate. Senate Democrats have made clear that voting rights is not like other issues we deal with in this Chamber. This isn't about regular old politics. It is not just about even regular old policy. It is about protecting the very soul of this Nation, about preserving our identity as a free people who are masters of our own destiny.

Republican obstruction is not a cause for throwing in the towel. As soon as next week, I am prepared to bring the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act here to the floor.

What we saw from Republicans today is not how the Senate is supposed to work. This is supposedly the world's greatest deliberative body, where we

debate, forge compromise, amend, and pass legislation to help the American people. That is the legacy of this great Chamber. The Senate needs to be restored to its rightful status as the world's greatest deliberative body.

Now, in the aftermath of the Civil War, and as the Nation began the colossal work of Reconstruction, America was more divided than at any point in history. It was hard to imagine that a single nation could endure after the bloody conflict of the four previous years.

At the time, the Republican Congress set to work on granting newly freed slaves the basic freedoms that had long been denied to them. These freedoms were eventually enshrined in the 14th and 15th Amendments, granting due process and the right to vote to all citizens, regardless of color or race.

Today, these amendments rank as some of the greatest and most revered accomplishments in congressional history. They are proof that our country is capable of living up to its founding promise, if we are willing to put in the work.

But at the time, the minority party in both Chambers refused to offer a single vote for any of the civil rights legislation put forward during Reconstruction. Not one vote. Not one vote. They argued these bills represented nothing more than the partisan interests of the majority—a power grab, they said, from vengeful northerners.

But that didn't stop the majority. If expanding basic freedoms meant going it alone, that was something they were willing to do. Today, we feel the same way.

To the patriots after the Civil War, this wasn't partisan; it was patriotic. And American democracy is better off today because the patriots in this Chamber at that time were undeterred by minority obstruction. Again, today, we feel the same way.

Today, the question before the Senate is how we will find a path forward on protecting our freedoms in the 21st century.

Members of this body now face a choice. They can follow in the footsteps of our patriotic predecessors in this Chamber, or they can sit by as the fabric of our democracy unravels before our very eyes.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Lin nomination.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Tana Lin, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The junior Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, I do have to make a quick comment before I jump into a unanimous consent request.

I did appreciate hearing the majority leader talk about how the minority and the majority stood up around Reconstruction. And I found it interesting that he continued to talk about the majority and the minority standing up for the rights of slaves and the rights of individuals, conveniently leaving out it was the Republicans at that time that were the majority that were actually standing up for the rights of all individuals of all races to be able to vote and to be able to be engaged, and it was the Democrats at that time that were working very hard to be able to block the rights of individuals to be able to vote.

So I did have to find it personally humorous when he seems to not be very shy about saying Republican and Democrat on this floor, at that moment he used majority and minority. But I digress. On to other issues.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2879

Madam President, the reason I came to the floor today is because, on September 9, the President of the United States took to the microphone and told the American people his patience was wearing thin—was the comment he made to the American people: My patience is wearing thin; therefore, I am going to start mandating that individuals across the country have to receive a vaccine.

To which he then put out an Executive order across to Federal workers, in particular, and told Federal workers they would have to have a vaccine by the end of this year, to be fully vaccinated, complete.

The deadlines he put in place for the Moderna vaccine, they would have had to have had the first shot by last week; by the Pfizer vaccine, they would have already have had to have the shot by this week; and then the J&J vaccine, they would have to have it by a couple weeks to be fully complete.

And he laid down this statement to say everybody needs to get vaccinated, and then walked away.

Office of Personnel Management and Office of Management and Budget didn't try to start engaging to start catching up on this because there was no rule that was in place. It was an Executive action.

I quickly started getting phone calls from individuals in my State who were exceptionally concerned about that. There are Federal workers who have worked for the Federal Government for decades, who had questions about religious accommodation or for medical exceptions, or, quite frankly, they had already had COVID and recovered from it and they were concerned about the vaccine coming in that they would have some kind of relapse at some point.

It is exceptionally rare, but if it is them and they walk back through it, it is their prerogative.

So I started asking questions immediately. I went to the CDC to ask if they had studied the 44 million Americans who have already had COVID and recovered, would their recommendation be those individuals don't have to have the vaccine if they can show they already have the antibodies in the their system.

And the answer I got back from CDC is: We have not studied it yet.

A year and a half in, and we have not studied it yet.

I went to the Office of Management and Budget to be able to visit with them. I heard one set of issues from them. Twenty-four hours later, I met with the Office of Personnel Management, and I heard a different set of issues that came from them. They were literally in conflict with each other 24 hours apart. They put out guidance. They put out a second set of guidance. Each set of guidance they put out becomes more chaotic in the process.

People who have worked remotely throughout this entire time of COVID and still continue to work remotely are a little confused as to why they are now being suddenly mandated to have a vaccine.

Individuals who have already had COVID, as I mentioned before, and have recovered are a little confused why they are being mandated to do this.

Individuals with medical accommodations who have asked for those, who literally are showing up with paperwork from their physician saying "This person is currently under cancer treatment, and they do not need to have the vaccine at this point during their moment of treatment," are being told by some people "No, that doesn't count. The CDC has said it is OK. Your doctor's note doesn't count," and by others, they are being told "No, that does count; you can delay it."

There is one set of rules from one Agency and one set of rules from another. In fact, even within the same Agency, from department to department, there is a different set of rules. Some Agencies have said that the volunteer advisory boards are also included. Other Agencies are saying: No, volunteer advisory boards are not included in this mandate.

Some are receiving word in State agencies in my State that because your agency takes Federal funds, everyone in your State agency also has to be vaccinated or we will cut off the Federal funds to your State. Some agencies are not calling with that same request.

The contractors who work with the Federal Government were told they were also included in this Executive order mandate and that everyone in their company needs to also be vaccinated, except the contractors are asking very simple questions: Is it everyone in our company or is it everyone who actually works on the contract for the Federal Government? They can't get a straight answer on that.

As simple as it is, even for those contractors who have asked—they have said: No, wait a minute, we have a contract already. Are you as the President trying to write in an additional stipulation into our contract that we didn't agree to based on an Executive action? You don't have legal authority to be able to do that. Is this about the current contract or is this about future contracting?

They have not been able to get an answer on that.

Quite frankly, we as a body—I am still fighting to make sure contractors don't have human trafficking in their contracting and get suspension for this, but apparently, with this Executive order, companies can still have human trafficking and not be suspended, but if they are not 100 percent vaccinated, they will be.

This is a bizarre world we are living in currently right now. This mandate came out for Federal workers, Federal contractors, maybe volunteer advisory boards, maybe State agencies, 6 weeks ago, and everyone is still asking questions—what in the world? In the meantime, real families in real-life situations are dealing with the consequences of the debris field behind this.

One of the Social Security agencies in my State, the folks who take care of those folks at the Social Security office—get their cards to them, get questions from them about Social Security—there are eight employees in that little agency, that little spot. Four of the folks are talking about leaving because they are concerned about the vaccine mandate, and they are not getting their questions answered. If that happens, the folks in that part of my State will not be able to get access to Social Security cards and will not be able to get their answers.

So what is happening? People are struggling with a long-term career, deciding whether they are going to leave, literally if they are going to follow their doctor's orders or if they are going to follow somebody from the CDC they have never met before and their orders that are coming down.

Federal contractors are trying to figure out how they can complete a contract because the President of the United States inserted a new element into their contract.

Oh, by the way, many Federal union workers are contacting my office, saying: What in the world? This was not part of our collective bargaining agreement. Literally, the President is adding a new element to our collective bargaining agreement after the fact and saying: I know you are a union member, but your local unions are not going to represent you.

And they haven't. They are going to their stewards and they are going to others and saying "Hey, I need somebody to represent me here in this," and they are telling them, "No. The President just inserted something into our collective bargaining agreement, and

you can do nothing about it." Federal union employees are ticked because they thought their union represented them, not the President of the United States.

Now, to be clear, I took the vaccine as soon as it was eligible for me. My wife did the same. My daughters did the same. I am incredibly grateful for the vaccine. I encourage people all over my State, and have from the beginning, to take the vaccine. It has gone through a rigorous, scientific process. But people in my State, like the 49 other States in this great country, all know this fact to be true: There are side effects for some people in the vaccine. It is a small group, but no one knows if they are in that group until they take the vaccine. There are also dramatic effects for people who get COVID. Some people are asymptomatic—literally get it, recover, never even knew they had it—and some people die from it in a horrible death in a hospital. You never know until you get it.

That is why each individual American has to be able to evaluate their risk of whether they are going to risk it to get COVID or risk it to get the vaccine. I think the risk is much lower in getting the vaccine. Science has proved that number to be accurate. But, you know what, I don't get to decide for them. They have to decide for them. I can bring information to them and let them make the decision. But, instead, the President of the United States has stood up and said: My patience is wearing thin. You have to do what I say regardless if you are under cancer treatments and regardless if you are under any other process.

I even asked the Office of Personnel Management: What are you going to do for religious accommodations?

The answer came back: We cannot decide someone's sincerity.

The next day, I talked to the Office of Personnel Management, which is actually putting the details together, and they gave me a seven-point decision-making process to help people decide if someone's religious beliefs are sincere or not.

This is a mess, and there are lots of people who are caught up in this who just want their government to help them, not fire them for making a decision that affects their personal life and their family. That is why I have been after this for 6 weeks since the famous "I am losing patience" speech. For 6 weeks, I have talked about this. For 6 weeks, I have made phone calls to every entity I could make phone calls, written letters, brought legislation. For 6 weeks, I have brought these issues up and said this is a real problem that is out there. For 6 weeks, I am not being heard on this.

There are Americans in my great State who are now having to decide if they are going to leave a career they love serving their neighbors or if they are going to be compelled to take a vaccine risk just because the President has said: My patience is wearing thin.

Just to reinforce a simple statement about people making decisions on risks—it is interesting to me. On the first of October, another Executive order came out that said: If individuals take the vaccine and they are a Federal worker, because of this new mandate, if they do have severe side effects from it, we will cover them medically.

That was a little reminder to some people who were hesitating of why they hesitated.

Listen, why don't we go back to doing what we do as Americans: Respect each other, encourage people to do the right thing, and incentivize. But this chaotic mandate where you don't know if you are a Federal contractor; you don't know the rules if you are a Federal employee; you don't know the rules if you are on the advisory board; you don't know the rules even if you are in a State agency—by the way, the deadlines for Moderna and Pfizer have already passed, and you still don't know the rules. They are nearing a moment of being fired and no one even has the details yet? Please.

Why don't you listen to the people in your own State asking very straightforward questions? This is not about whether you should take the vaccine. This is, are you going to fire a 25-year Federal employee because they disagree with you? That is what this is all about.

Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of my bill that sets aside this Executive order from the President, S. 2879, and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time, passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I reserve the right to object. My friend from Oklahoma serves as the ranking member of the Government Operations Subcommittee of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. I sincerely appreciate that he brings a thoughtful approach to Federal workforce issues and that we frequently have an opportunity to work together to make government work more efficiently and more effectively.

Unfortunately, I strongly disagree with the legislation being put forward today. This proposal would roll back policies put in place to make sure that Federal workers and Federal contractors who are paid with taxpayer dollars are vaccinated against COVID-19. These Executive orders protect not just the Federal workforce all across our country, but they help protect their families and their communities. There are also commonsense exceptions for people with disabilities, with medical conditions, or with sincerely held reli-

gious beliefs. These policies were put in place both carefully and fairly.

The American people are literally sick and tired of this pandemic—a pandemic that has already claimed over 725,000 lives, including the lives of our friends, our neighbors, and our family members. They want this pandemic to end, and vaccines is how we get there.

From the beginning of this pandemic, I and many of my colleagues have been dedicated to bringing safe and effective vaccines to the people who live in our States by investing in science and research and by strengthening our domestic supply chains.

COVID-19 vaccines are now widely available, but we know from trusted scientists and public health experts that we need higher rates of vaccination to get this pandemic under control. The politicization of safe, effective, public health measures is making it harder to end this horrible pandemic. The legislation before us today would without question move us in the wrong direction. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, I understand the statement by my friend from Michigan. I have to tell you, though, I wish this was rolled out in an orderly fashion. It has been 6 weeks of chaos and unanswered questions, and the Federal Government is about to fire thousands of Federal employees because they did not bend to their will.

Many Federal employees asked for a medical exemption and were told no. Literally, they brought a letter from their doctor and were told no. Individuals asked for religious accommodation and were told no, they will not get it. It is one thing to say it is offered; it is another thing to say it was actually extended.

I will tell you, from talking to people in my State in the Federal workforce, they are not getting those orderly religious accommodations, those orderly medical exemptions. They are not getting it. They are being told "No, it is a mandate," and then they are being told "You are about to lose your career. Is it worth it?" These are individuals literally choosing between their health and their job.

By this January, I don't know how many thousands of Federal employees we are going to have out of our system and how much wisdom we are going to lose out of all these Agencies. But this horrible game of chicken that the President is right now playing with not only Federal employees but with people all over the country is a terrible thing to do to our economy and to individuals who are seeking the best service.

It is amazing to me how many individuals served through the entire pandemic faithfully and took great risk to serve their neighbors who literally the President is about to fire as their thank you. That is wrong. That is wrong.

I stood last week and talked to individuals who work for American Airlines, who are really concerned and frustrated, who love working with American Airlines but are now receiving a mandate coming down on them that they are digging in and saying: I am not going to do it. I have already had COVID. I have recovered. I have natural immunity. Why am I being asked to do this as well?

And they are getting only that the President is mandating it, and: We do Federal work, and so it is going to be required.

It is the same thing happening to packing companies, to manufacturers, to small businesses around the country.

Let me just read you a story. One employee who called our office last week is currently in cancer treatment for the fourth time and is receiving an experimental treatment. She is being told that she will be terminated from her job November 24 if she doesn't get vaccinated, because the President is requiring it on everyone.

That does not sound like an accommodation that is occurring because of medical accommodations.

It is nice to say in DC: Talk to the people in your State what is actually happening on the ground.

All of this push that is happening around healthcare workers all around the country, what does that really look like?

When we talked to an administrator of one of our nursing homes. Most of the individuals in our nursing homes, thankfully, as residents and as staff, have been vaccinated; but some have had COVID, and they are concerned about getting the vaccine. Whether that is rational or not, that is where they are, but they have natural immunity.

This particular nursing home that we talked to, 20 percent of her employees have said that they will not take the vaccine. This particular nursing home in a rural area will close and expose all of those residents and their families to chaos because Biden said: I am losing patience.

It is one thing to say we need to be able to push back on this pandemic. I absolutely agree. It is another thing to irrationally close down nursing homes that are taking care of patients that, by the way, were filled with people—frontline workers—who put their life at risk last year to serve people.

And now to push those people out and fire them this year?

"You are welcome," apparently, is what the President should be saying to them.

All I am asking for is reason. All I am asking for is to consider those 44 million Americans who have natural immunity and to accept what we all know scientifically to be true. All I am asking for is real medical exemptions. That is not irrational. All I am asking for is real religious accommodations.

Those are things that should be straightforward, common sense, and

doable. But for whatever reason, the train is barreling down the tracks. In the debris field is our Federal workers, individuals who work in private companies, healthcare workers across the board.

I, just this weekend, received an email that was a long email from a very shy physician in one of our major hospitals in Tulsa. She told me flat out: I don't seek personal attention. I don't do media stuff.

In fact, she said: I don't even have social media at all.

But she detailed out her healthcare decisions and what was going on in her own life and said: I do not want to receive this vaccine.

As a physician at a major hospital in Tulsa, she is about to lose her job because President Biden's patience is running thin.

What do her patients do next?

Mr. President, don't play chicken with our families. This is real to them. They do not need to lose their job because they have medical conditions, religious accommodations, or they have natural immunity. They have suffered through COVID once, and now you are going to fire them for that?

Let's have a real dialogue, not a rushed "My patience is wearing thin." With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Louisiana.

REMEMBERING MICHAEL B. ENZI

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I wanted to say a couple of words about a couple of friends.

I really miss Mike Enzi. I am referring, of course, to Senator Mike Enzi, our colleague who served the people of Wyoming and the people of America for 24 years in this body. We lost him a couple of months ago. I tried to get out to his beautiful State to say good-bye, and I couldn't. I couldn't rearrange things. I just—I miss him.

I was thinking about Mike this morning. I had a meeting over here early—not too early, about 8 o'clock. I walked from my little, overpriced Capitol Hill apartment, through the park, to the Capitol. The park I am talking about is just east of the Capitol. Mike would always walk through the park when he would come to vote. Not always, but many times he would leave his office and get his exercise and enjoy God's beautiful day by walking through the park. I walked with him a couple of times.

Mike was so many things, but if I had to describe him in three words, it would be "decent," "smart," and "one of the best fishermen I have ever known."

I want to talk about the decent part and what Mike Enzi meant to me. I mean, I can talk about his background and the fact that he was a giant among Senators and how everybody respected him, but everybody knows that.

When I first got here—I think all new Senators feel this way. The Members of this body are very, very smart, and they are very, very driven. And at least

for me, when I first got here, it was a very intimidating place. I think that is true for most Senators. I think if you ask all 100 Senators what it was like their first month here, 99 of them would tell you that they were intimidated. The 100th would be lying because this is an intimidating place.

But, you know, Mike went out of his way, I remember—I guess he could tell I was insecure—to reassure me. You know, every few weeks I would see him in the cloakroom or I would see him in committee, and he would say: Kennedy, you know, you are making a real contribution to this group.

Well, of course, I wasn't, but it made me feel so good and so more sure of myself. And it also made me realize, when I reflect back on it, what a decent thing it was for Mike to do. I mean, he had been here 24 years. He had his pick of chairmanship. I mean, he really was a giant in this body. I was green as a gourd, brandnew; and he didn't have to do that, but he did. I never told him how much that meant to me, and I really regret not telling him that now.

I feel so bad for Diana—just the most wonderful person in the world. I don't know Mike's children—Amy, Emily, and Brad—but I have a feeling, knowing that they are the children of Mike Enzi and Diana, that they are three wonderful Americans.

I just wanted to say that. I was thinking about Mike today. I miss him.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT TRAVIS SCOTT

Madam President, No. 2, we have an organization in Louisiana called the Public Affairs Research Council. It is one of our premiere think tanks. It is an independent group. They are not political. They do serious research, and they offer very serious suggestions about how we, in Louisiana, can solve some of our social and economic problems. We call it PAR, Public Affairs Research Council.

I don't know how long PAR has been around. As long as I have been in government, which is the late 1980s, it was there way before I came. I didn't have time to look up when it was founded, but I think it is pretty much 2 years older than dirt. It has been there. It is an institution in Louisiana.

It is privately funded. People who care about our State contribute money to do PAR's work. I religiously read all of PAR's white papers and research papers. Everybody I know who cares about my State takes their suggestions seriously.

To be the director or the president of PAR, it is quite an honor. It is a lot of work and it is a big deal. Our president of PAR is retiring. He is a friend of mine. His name is Robert Travis Scott, and I want to say a word about Robert.

Robert is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with high honors, a graduate of Johns Hopkins. He has done it all. Robert has been the president of PAR since 2011. But before that, he was the capital bureau chief for our Times-Picayune newspaper in

New Orleans, and that is how I got to know him. Robert was never an agenda journalist. And we know that those journalists, particularly in the print media, exist, and they exist in the electronic media.

I couldn't tell you today what Robert's politics are. I don't even know what party he is in. I don't know if he is in a party. He was always, when he was a reporter, a straight shooter. He called it like he saw it. He played it straight down the middle. And if he thought he ought to bust you upside the head because you did something dumb in public service, he would do it, but he didn't do it just in a gratuitous way.

So it was no surprise to me when PAR asked Robert to take over running the Public Affairs Research Council. And he did that. He has done it since 2011, 10 years. Robert and PAR have contributed so much to my State.

His replacement is going to be a gentleman by the name of Dr. Steve Procopio, who I know as well. Steve is going to do a great job. But we are going to miss Robert. I hope he doesn't go far.

I just wanted to come say a word about my good friend Robert Travis Scott.

#### TAX CODE

Madam President, now let me say one final word on a timely topic here.

As you know, our body is going to soon be considering, I think, some changes to our Tax Code. We don't know exactly what they are.

I just want to strongly encourage my colleagues and my friends—because I like everybody in this body—if we are going to make changes to our Tax Code, to make those changes on the basis of sound economic principles. Don't make them on the basis of class warfare.

Some of the proponents of some of the changes that I have seen discussed in the media, in my opinion, don't understand the complexity of the American economy. They just don't. They think of our economy as it was in primitive times, when our ancestors were hunters and gatherers.

In those days, in primitive times, when our ancestors were hunters and gatherers, the only value that was created in the economy that we had was labor. It was all labor. And then, in those days, when somebody became rich, they became rich by exploiting the capital of others.

In fact, that is what Marx talked about. Marx's concept of the economy was that the only value in an economy is work. And if you become wealthy in an economy, you become wealthy as a result of exploiting the labor of others.

So Marx agreed with this description of the—I want to say our medieval, but it was way before medieval times, when our ancestors were hunters and gatherers.

That is not the American economy today. The American economy today is the greatest economy in all of human

history because it is a marriage of capital and labor.

And capital and labor are not antagonistic. They work together. Now, it is not without friction. I understand that. But that is why we have become the greatest economy in all of human history. And when capital joins labor and the two contribute and play their own role, we are able to all work and save and invest and fund the research and development and do the innovative things that have given all of us the greatest quality of life in all of human history. So capital is not a bad thing; it is a good thing.

And there has been a lot of talk around here about billionaires—bad, bad billionaires; they are not paying their fair share. I have never completely understood how you determine what the fair share is of somebody.

Let me put it another way. I don't understand what the fair share is of what somebody else has worked for. I don't know what my fair share is of what Madam President's—what she has worked for. It is yours. You worked for it.

But that aside, this talk about the bad, bad billionaires and they don't pay their fair share and they are hurting our economy and they only got rich based on exploiting other people's labor, I think, shows a gross misunderstanding of the complexity of the U.S. economy and a gross misunderstanding of free enterprise. And I hope we don't lose sight of that as we go about the process of making changes to our Tax Code.

Let me say it again. If we make changes to our Tax Code, let's don't make them on the basis of class warfare. Let's make them on the basis of sound economic principles.

So congratulations to Robert Travis Scott from PAR. Robert, I hope you have a wonderful retirement. Don't be moving back to South Carolina or Baltimore or other places. Stay in Louisiana.

And, Mike, I miss you. Mike Enzi, I miss you.

I have heard it said before that—I didn't say this, now; I am just repeating it—most Senators believe in God, and the rest of them think they are God. Mike Enzi was in the former category. Just a great man. Smart, good fisherman. But most of all, he was decent.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF SAULE OMAROVA

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I rise today to discuss President Biden's nominee to serve as one of our Nation's chief banking regulators.

About a month ago, President Biden announced his intention to nominate

Cornell University Law Professor Saule Omarova to serve as Comptroller of the Currency.

I was on the floor recently, and I spoke about her nomination. And I noted at the time that she has been celebrated on the far left for promoting ideas that she herself has described as “radical.” It is one of the few things on which I agree with her. These are radical ideas. In fact, they are very radical ideas.

And most disturbing about this is they demonstrate—these ideas of hers—a very clear aversion to America's free enterprise system at a very fundamental level, despite the fact that our free enterprise system has produced an incredible level of prosperity and standard of living.

I have to say, I don't think I have ever seen a more radical choice for any regulatory spot in our Federal Government that I can think of than Professor Omarova. And let me be clear. That assessment is based on the things that Professor Omarova has written and said in her own words, often quite recently.

So today I want to focus on just one of the radical ideas that she presented in great detail in a paper that she wrote in 2016—not exactly ancient history. This is her plan to have the Federal Government set wages and prices for large sectors of the U.S. economy; in fact, the most important goods and services in our economy.

Under her plan, the Federal Government would designate—and these are her words—“systemically important prices and indexes” or “SIPIs.” She creates an acronym for these things; she calls them SIPIs—for the Federal Reserve to regulate.

So she details five different approaches, different ways, that the government could regulate and take control over these prices of these systemically important goods. And they are all—it is all a terrible idea based on the completely erroneous premise that somehow the government knows what the price of these things should be.

But among all of them, one that is maybe the most troubling is one that she describes here. And this is what Professor Omarova argued. She says: “The . . . final regulatory option we think worth considering is . . . price maintenance—typically within some band—through OMOs.”

Now, OMO stands for open market operations, and that is an operation that the Federal Reserve engages in. But the Fed uses open market operations—or OMOs, in Professor Omarova's lexicon—to just buy and sell securities for one purpose, and that is to manage the amount of money in the supply—in the economy, to manage monetary policy, to do it by managing the supply of money. That is it.

What Professor Omarova is advocating for is a radical departure from this very, very narrow and limited activity. What her plan would do is to empower the Fed—and these are her

words—"to buy and sell in markets . . . with a view to keeping particular [systemically important prices] within particular bands thought necessary for the purposes of maintaining systemic stability."

Wow. Now, what kind of prices does Professor Omarova have in mind for the Fed to control by buying and selling these commodities? Well, she tells us. She says:

Various candidate SIPs here come to mind. . . . Certain sensitive commodity prices—those for widely used fuels, food-stuffs, and some other raw materials, for example—constitute another class of candidates. Finally, wage or salary indices constitute yet another class of candidates.

Now, here are some of the other candidates for price controls that she has in mind: "home prices," "productive inputs" such as "energy," "certain . . . metals, and other natural resources."

In other words, like all the most important commodities in America, under Professor Omarova's radical plan, it would be the government that would set these prices rather than a free market determining how these prices should be set. The government would control everything from the size of your paycheck to the amount you pay at the grocery store for a gallon of milk or a gallon of gasoline.

There is no more allocation of scarce goods based on who values them the most—the brilliance of the way that a spontaneous market allocates resources automatically to their best and highest use and enables us to have the lowest possible cost for the most possible goods. None of that. No more.

We will have a committee—it is called the Fed Open Market Committee—and they will dictate the prices that we will pay and how the resources of America will be allocated.

Now, if her radical idea sounds familiar, that is because it is familiar. It has been tried—been tried several times—repeatedly, and every single time it has failed spectacularly, time and again, in all the centrally planned economies in the world, especially the Soviet Union.

In fact, Soviet efforts to control prices in their economy were so abysmal, they failed so badly that they spawned countless jokes within the Soviet Union that illustrate the folly of central planning, the inherent impossibility of central planning.

One of my favorites is about a guy who walks into a store. He walks up to the shopkeeper and says: You don't have any meat, do you?

And the shopkeeper replies: No, we don't have any fish. It is the store next door that doesn't have any meat.

So we can laugh about these things that people living under the misery of the Soviet Union, they had a sort of gallows humor about the misery of their circumstances.

But the fact is, it was this notion that a really smart committee at the center of the government could dictate the prices and the allocation of all resources; that idea is what caused the

misery—ultimately, of course, caused the collapse of the Soviet Union.

This is what happens anywhere where governments try to control what should be left to the free men and women in terms of allocating resources. Government-run economies, like the very one that Professor Omarova is proposing—they don't work.

And let me stress a point that I have made before about Professor Omarova. The fact that she was born and raised in the Soviet Union has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not the Senate should confirm her to run a major financial agency.

There are some unbelievably wonderful, successful, patriotic, terrific American citizens who had the misfortune of growing up behind the Iron Curtain. That has nothing to do with whether or not she is qualified for this job. It is her advocacy for the policies that, in disturbing ways, resemble those of the Soviet Union—that is what should inform our judgment about whether this person should be the chief regulator of the Nation's federally chartered banks.

Now, Professor Omarova would likely argue that her centrally planned economy would be different. That is always the case. This time we will get socialism right. As her paper notes, the Fed does already use open market operations to implement monetary policy. That is true. So why not let the Fed use a similar mechanism to set and maintain stable prices for all kinds of important assets?

Well, the answer is simple: Making decisions about what individual—maybe dozens, maybe hundreds of individual assets across something as complex as our entire economy, what they should cost, how they should be allocated, that is an impossibly complex endeavor. There is no technocrat, no bureau, no committee, no agency—there is no entity that can figure that out.

It is the organic decisions, individual decisions, of millions of free people that spontaneously create the allocation that maximizes the well-being of the people of a free society.

By the way, there is a pretty strong case to be made that the government doesn't do such a great job on monetary policy either. People that we have serious doubts about how well they set the price of a single thing—namely, the U.S. dollar—do we want them directly controlling the prices of everything or at least everything that is important? I think not.

So the more I read the radical ideas that Professor Omarova has advocated for and the more I think about the damage this would do to our economy and our society, the more troubled I am by her nomination. So I strongly urge President Biden to reconsider his nomination, his decision to nominate her.

#### THE ECONOMY

Madam President, I have one other topic I want to address this afternoon,

and it has to do with this really extraordinary and very reckless tax-and-spending spree that our Democratic colleagues seem determined to attempt to pass.

Now, there has been a lot of focus, understandably, on the staggering size of this, right? Is this going to be the \$3.5 trillion of the budget resolution that passed here and is that a compromise from \$6 trillion that some of our Democratic colleagues preferred or 7 trillion—or will it be 1.5 or 2?

OK. I would just say that there is no doubt in my mind, wherever this ends up, if it ends up anywhere, it is going to do a lot of damage. It is going to do a lot of damage to our economy. And I think that is probably why there are significant reservations, even among Democrats, and there is not any support among any Republicans for the various iterations of this bill.

At the heart of it, what this bill does is several things, but one of them is to attempt to redefine the very role of the Federal Government in our society. And what I am referring to is the attempt to have the Federal Government provide the needs—like all kinds of basic needs, so basically anyone in the middle class—from cradle to grave. It is free pre-K, free childcare, free paid leave, free community college—oh, maybe that one got dropped. I mean, many of them aren't even means-tested. They are not meant to be means-tested. If they are, you can have many multiples of the median family income and still qualify. It is all about making the middle class dependent on government. What a terrible idea.

But I will have more to say on another occasion about the idea of putting the entire middle class on the dole. Instead, I want to focus for a minute on a particularly ill-conceived provision on the tax side of this because it has massive tax increases as part of this proposal. And one of them is the huge increase in the U.S. global minimum tax. When we did tax reform of 2017 and brought about the end of corporate inversions, among other things, we established a global minimum tax at a low rate of 10 percent.

Now, what the Biden administration is proposing is going to completely upend the tax reform of 2017. We probably all remember the big announcements about this international agreement on multinational taxation. It consists of two pillars, as you may recall.

Pillar 1 is this unprecedented change that would allow foreign countries to tax American companies based on the sales of the American companies into the foreign country. We have never had a tax policy based on that. You could tax the income of a company that is based in your country; you don't get to reach into the income of a company based in some other country.

Many of our allies and friends around the world have long wanted to grab some income tax from American companies, and American administrations



have fought it. This administration has embraced it.

It is a big revenue transfer from U.S. Treasury to the treasuries of other countries. Unsurprisingly, this feature—this pillar 1—has been a high priority for these other countries. As I say, they have long sought this source of money. That is pillar 1.

Pillar 2 is an agreement by OECD countries to impose a 15-percent minimum tax on the foreign income of their multinational countries.

Now, why was this important? Well, this is very important to the Biden administration because they want to raise the tax imposed on foreign income of U.S. multinationals, and they at least implicitly acknowledge that if foreign countries don't do likewise—if they don't have a very burdensome tax regime like we are going to create under the Biden plan—then we would be at a huge competitive disadvantage, and multinationals would have no choice but to flee the United States and many, many jobs going with them. So that is pillar 2.

Now, here is one of the big problems with this whole arrangement, this whole negotiation. As I said before, the administration has implicitly acknowledged that if the rest of the world doesn't impose this huge minimum tax on their multinationals, we would be at a huge competitive disadvantage. That is why they negotiate with us. But there is a very real possibility that some of these countries—many of them—may not implement a global minimum tax, despite the tentative agreement. And there are at least two reasons.

One is, these countries have only reluctantly agreed to pillar 2 in the first place. They didn't think this was such a great idea, but they agreed to it in return for pillar 1—right?—in return for the commitment that they would be able to grab some of the tax revenue that we normally collect.

There is a problem with that. Implementing pillar 1 requires changing the treaties—the multilateral or the bilateral tax treaties—that the United States has with these other countries. Changing the treaty requires a two-thirds vote in the Senate because under the Constitution, ratification of a treaty is subject to a two-thirds vote.

Well, guess what. I don't think there is two-thirds of the U.S. Senate prepared to vote for this tax giveaway to these other countries. So if I am right, then pillar 1 never gets implemented. If pillar 1 never gets implemented, then the sole motivation for these countries to raise their corporate global minimum tax goes away.

So I am not sure how they square this circle. And at a minimum, I would think they ought to sort this out—the administration, that is—before they just go ahead and put American companies at a huge competitive disadvantage.

By the way, even if they get their way exactly, we are going to be at a

huge competitive disadvantage. The best they could negotiate from OECD countries was a global minimum tax of 15 percent.

Their own proposal has an effective global minimum tax rate of 26 percent that we will be imposing on our own companies. That is a pretty big difference on the margin, and it creates an incentive to have your multinational headquartered somewhere other than the United States of America. That is a very bad idea.

So I think there is a very substantial risk that when the administration gets wrapped around the axle because they are finding they can't get the two-thirds majority in the Senate for us to inflict this wound on ourselves—on our own economy—well, the rest of the world is going to rethink raising their minimum tax. And yet—and yet—our Democratic colleagues seem determined to move ahead with this huge tax increase and all this spending. And who knows, maybe it passes any day now.

But let me be clear, this is a destructive tax increase. It will hurt American workers, make the United States a less competitive place to do business, whether or not the rest of the world follows suit. And so I would just urge my colleagues, don't do this damage. I don't know what people think they are fixing.

In 2019—just 1 year after the full implementation of our tax reform—we had the best economy of my lifetime. There was an end to corporate inversions. There was an economic boom. We had a record low unemployment rate—alltime record low unemployment for African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, women. Workforce participation rate was at multidecade highs. Wages were growing, and wages were growing fastest for the lowest income workers. Under our regulatory and tax reforms, we were narrowing the income gap and allowing Americans to create wealth and prosperity and achieve a higher standard of living.

I ask my colleagues: What was so bad about that? What is really so bad about the best economy of my lifetime—rising wages, a better standard of living, and a narrowing of the income gap? What was so bad about that that you want to throw it out the door, out the window? I don't get that. I don't get that at all.

It is not too late. Maybe we will be fortunate enough to be able to dodge this. But if we don't, a lot of families, workers, Americans of all walks of life will have a lower standard of living as a result of this very ill-conceived tax policy in the Biden administration.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The Senator from Wisconsin.

(The remarks of Ms. BALDWIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 3022 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

EDUCATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about America's education system.

As a result of the pandemic, parents have had a front-row seat to their kids' education. Parents are now engaged with their kids' schools much more than ever before. Many parents have had to make tough decisions about a number of things during the pandemic, but especially about their children's education.

Yet parental involvement, I believe, is a good thing for kids in our schools. The more parental involvement, the better. Parents deserve a say in what their kids learn and how best to learn it.

But all across America, school boards and teachers unions and city councils have been outraged to see parents involved as they have been.

Many parents are furious right now. In many cases, they have found out their kids were spending more time on liberal ideology than they were on science or on math.

Earlier this year, the State of California proposed teaching math—hard to believe, but this is what they said—from a social justice perspective—math from a social justice perspective.

Parents, appropriately, were furious, and the proposal was not rejected completely, but just postponed until next year.

Oregon now allows students to graduate—graduate—without proving they are proficient in reading, in writing, or in math.

San Francisco schools spent the entire last year closed, yet the San Francisco school board had spare time to propose changing the name of Abraham Lincoln High School. Kids are not in school, but the school board had plenty of time to consider and propose changing the name of Abraham Lincoln High School.

Well, parents, again, were enraged and this proposal was dropped.

It is very obvious why so many parents all across the country are so angry right now. They work hard. They pay their taxes. And what they see day in and day out are Democratic politicians hurting their kids' future, getting in the way of the education that parents believe their children need.

Last week, we saw even more proof. The Department of Education published the National Assessment of Educational Progress. It comes out every 5 years. It was time. It is the Nation's report card. This year's report card shows test scores in math and in reading have plummeted. This was the first time these scores have dropped in 50 years.

The lesson is obvious: We are spending too much time away from the things that students ought to be spending their time on. We need to spend less time on ideology, more time on education of the basics—real knowledge, real skills.



Many school boards across the country refuse to listen. In fact, the National School Boards Association complained to the Biden administration about angry parents. Now the Attorney General is treating angry parents like criminals. The Attorney General of the United States is deciding that angry parents are to be treated like criminals. Attorney General Garland has ordered Federal prosecutors to work with local police to form “strategies for addressing threats against school administrators, board members, teachers, and staff.”

The Department of Justice says it will form a task force on these alleged threats against school boards. The task force is going to include representatives from the Department’s Criminal Division, from the National Security Division, the Civil Rights Division, and Federal prosecutors, as well as the FBI.

Joe Biden is sending in the cavalry to school board meetings to focus on parents rather than focusing on the education the children need and deserve. He is sending the National Security Division after moms and dads because they are concerned about their children’s education.

After the Attorney General’s order, I joined with 10 of my Republican colleagues and demanded a legal justification from Attorney General Garland. I still haven’t received a response.

We have also found out that Attorney General Garland has a family member who helps schools develop left-wing curriculum. The Attorney General’s family member is helping schools developing leftwing curriculum. The Attorney General’s son-in-law owns a company with millions and millions of dollars in government contracts—contracts by the Attorney General’s son-in-law—contracts with schools all across America.

Well, maybe it is a coincidence, and maybe it is not. Attorney General Garland needs to tell the American people whether this played a role in his decision to treat parents like criminals.

Yet the problem is much bigger than the Attorney General of the United States. The problem is how Democrats treat and think about parents and working families.

The former Governor of the State of Virginia said recently:

I don’t think parents should be telling schools what they can teach.

This is the former Governor of Virginia:

I don’t think parents should be telling schools what they can teach.

Last month, Senator MIKE BRAUN asked the Secretary of Education about the role of parents in education. He asked if parents were “the primary stakeholder” in their kids’ education.

Secretary Cardona said this: “They’re an important stakeholder.”

In other words, they are not the primary stakeholders. Parents are not the primary stakeholders.

Is it any surprise so many parents are deciding to educate their children at home?

So who does the Secretary of Education think is the primary educator of our children? The union bosses? Are they the primary educators of our children?

Democrats act like kids are the property of the schools. And schools, of course, are the property—in the minds of the Democrats—of the teachers unions. Parents have every right to be upset with what is happening in the public schools all across this Nation. Parents have every right to demand real improvements.

It is time for the Democrats to stop taking orders from the teachers unions and start listening to parents and to the students.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, over the last couple of years, our Democratic colleagues have suggested a range of unrealistic and downright harmful policies in our shared goal—and I emphasize the words “shared goal”—to reduce carbon emissions. But it is not just a question of what you are doing; it is a question of how you are going about doing it. The way they are going about doing it is going to raise the prices of electricity, gasoline, and all forms of energy on people on fixed incomes, people who are seniors living on Social Security, and others. They have proposed everything from the socialist agenda that is the Green New Deal to more targeted, but no more realistic, zero net emission mandates.

Now, we all know that energy transition occurs at all times. I have traveled to India—perhaps the Presiding Officer has—and to other countries where people literally cook their food using cow manure patties, dried cow manure. I remember Prime Minister Modi coming to Houston, TX, during an event that we called “Howdy, Modi!” when he heralded the use of increased access to cooking gas so that his constituents, Indians, wouldn’t have to use dried cow dung to cook their food—that represents progress—or wouldn’t have to use wood chips anymore.

Then the transition was to coal, then to natural gas, nuclear, and other forms of energy. So energy transition occurs at all times. The only question is how it comes about, whether it is as a result of higher taxes and forced government mandates or whether it is which form of energy competes favorably for consumers because of its cost and availability.

Well, of all of the dangerous policy proposals, I think the reckless tax-and-spending-spree bill takes the cake. This is the so-called reconciliation bill that is now pending over in the House, or is being negotiated. Nobody has actually seen it yet, but we keep hearing what is in it, and we keep hearing that the left is negotiating with the far left. This is what happens when our Democratic colleagues don’t include people in the opposing political party to try

to build consensus. It is pretty hard, particularly when you only have 50 votes.

This isn’t like FDR’s New Deal after the Great Depression, wherein he had huge majorities. I think what our Democratic colleagues are finding out is that, when they try to go it alone, passing these radical policies is really, really hard to do because you have no room for error.

This reminds me of the yellow jackets protests in France, starting back in 2018, as to what is happening now with some of these mandates and these higher taxes. This was, as you may recall, a social movement of French working-class families who felt disenfranchised from the urban elite, who “can focus on the end of the world,” they said, “while we’re worrying about the end of the month.” I think it is pretty apt to where we are today. This reckless tax-and-spending spree not only compiles the most irresponsible policies into one massive bill, as I said, but our Democratic colleagues, along with the White House, are trying to pass it in a 50-50 Senate, on a party-line vote.

Well, talk about bad timing. This comes at a time when Texans and other Americans are already being pummeled by rising costs, especially at the gas pump. Inflation is rearing its ugly head everywhere in terms of energy costs, groceries, commodities, and with things like a washing machine or a new refrigerator. Try buying a new house, and you will see the cost has just jumped dramatically.

It is a demonstrable fact that, in the last year, gasoline costs have gone up 55 percent. The average price today is about \$3.33 a gallon. A year ago, it was \$2.16 a gallon. For somebody who drives a pickup truck—and we have a lot of pickup trucks in Texas—it would have cost \$56 for a tank of gas a year ago, but, today, it is \$87—a \$31 increase.

Unfortunately, sky-high gasoline prices aren’t the only growing drain on family budgets. As I mentioned, electricity, groceries, clothing, eating out occasionally at a restaurant, and countless other expenses are on the rise. Prices are so high that inflation is outpacing wage growth, essentially giving workers a pay cut. Let me say that again. If you are earning, let’s say, \$10,000 a year—just to pick a number—and inflation rises like it does with gasoline costs, you are effectively getting a pay cut because of the rising costs of goods and services.

But that doesn’t seem to deter our Democratic colleagues from moving full steam ahead on legislation that would drive these costs even higher. After spending nearly \$2 billion earlier this year on a party-line vote, our colleagues are back for round 2, and this time they are prepared to take a wrecking ball to one of our crown jewels in this country, which is our energy sector. By drowning the energy sector in tax hikes or in increased regulations and costs, our Democratic colleagues think that they can achieve their green

energy dreams with no consequences, but, of course, that is just a dangerous fantasy.

It sort of reminds me of what I saw reported today by NPR. NPR reports: "Despite climate change promises, governments plan to ramp up fossil fuel production." Indeed, the President and members of this body are going to be heading to a climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, starting on October 31. As you know, usually what happens at those conferences, just like at the Paris climate conference in 2015, is that governments make extravagant promises to reduce emissions and to eliminate fossil fuels, including coal and oil and gas, in favor of clean energy.

Now, I am not deprecating clean energy. In Texas, we believe in an "all of the above" energy policy. We produce more electricity from wind turbines than any other State in the Nation. So I am certainly not bad-mouthing clean energy, but it has to play a role and not dominate to the exclusion of other forms of energy.

But, as the NPR article points out, "despite lofty commitments [made] by governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, they are still planning," according to this U.N. report that was just issued, "to extract huge amounts of energy from fossil fuels in the coming years."

This report was published on Wednesday, today, and it details how the world's largest fossil fuel producers plan to carry on using coal, gas, and oil despite promises made in Paris in 2015. So it really makes you wonder what is going on when these political leaders go to places like Glasgow or Paris, make extravagant promises, and then come back home and break those promises.

Well, I think I know what is happening here because, just like in France in 2018, when the government tried to impose a new fuel tax on consumers, the yellow jackets protested. They said: You are worried about the end of the world. We are worried about how we will pay our bills through the end of the month.

I think a similar phenomenon is occurring now because none of these green energy fantasies come cheap. That is another reason energy costs are going higher. Whether you are talking about energy or agriculture or any other sector of the economy, higher taxes, which are what our colleagues are attempting to assess against the energy sector, always mean higher prices for consumers.

Companies don't absorb those costs. They pass them right along to consumers in the form of increased costs. In fact, many businesses can't absorb increased taxes and keep their prices stable because they simply can't operate in the black, and they will go bankrupt. So businesses just don't take the hits that keep on coming. They will raise prices; they will lay off employees or will implement any combination

of cost-cutting measures, and that is exactly what this pie-in-the-sky, green energy fantasy bill contained in the reconciliation legislation would spur.

This year, as I have pointed out, has already given us the highest gas prices since 2014. Now, I just did this year over year, but they are the highest prices we have seen since 2014, and I have no doubt that President Biden's tax hikes will send those prices at the pump even higher just at a time when we are beginning to sound the alarm bells over inflation, including by Democratic-leaning economists like Larry Summers, who sounded the alarm over inflation.

I am old enough to remember when inflation was ranked at about 20 percent, and interest rates were up almost at 20 percent. People had to pay huge amounts of money or borrow huge amounts of money and pay exorbitant interest rates because of inflation.

We are in danger of getting back to those bad old days. The proposal our Democratic colleagues are trying to ram through Congress would increase taxes—already paid by energy companies—on income earned not in the United States but globally. It also adds a new tax, the Superfund excise tax, which was eliminated 25 years ago. They want to add that back on top. The Democrats want to resurrect this tax and force energy companies to pay more on every barrel of crude oil that is used in the United States.

Once again, the burden won't be, ultimately, on the energy and chemical companies. It will fall on consumers, who are already struggling post-COVID to get back on the job and pay the bills and provide for their families—only to be met with a kick in the teeth known as Bidenflation.

The middle class won't just be footing the bill for tax hikes on companies. This is, really, sort of an elitist irony. The Biden reconciliation bill would force middle-class families to subsidize the purchase of electric vehicles for wealthy Americans. Not only are we going to raise prices on you through tax increases, but we are going to take money out of your pocket and give it to rich people who can afford to buy these expensive electric vehicles. This bill provides a tax credit for electric vehicle purchases even if the vehicle is made completely or substantially in China. Won't they love that.

On top of that, you get a bigger tax credit for electric cars built in union shops—some of the greatest political friends of the Democratic Party. Our colleagues haven't provided a very good explanation for this, but I, for one, find it hard to believe that union-built electric vehicles are any greener or cleaner or emit less than nonunion-built vehicles. This is just a big wet kiss for a political constituency.

As a reminder, unlike gas-powered vehicle drivers, EV drivers don't pay any money into the highway trust fund. Now, if you buy a gallon of gasoline, I think it is 18 cents on the gallon

that goes into the highway trust fund that is used to build and maintain our bridges and roadways.

Because of more use of electric vehicles that don't pay any money into the highway trust fund, that trust fund is going broke.

So the tax breaks for the rich just keep on coming. They take money from middle-class families, give it to rich folks so they can buy fancy electric vehicles, courtesy of the American taxpayer.

I also have concerns about how the proposal that is being considered by the White House and our Democratic colleagues—how it would impact our energy security.

Over the last several decades, we have made incredible strides. Thanks to great investment, innovation, and expertise in the energy sector, we have made great strides to reduce our dependency on other countries to keep the lights on in the United States.

After all, we don't want a repeat of the 1970s energy crisis.

Now, I know a lot of these young folks who are here serving as pages may not have been around in the 1970s, but they can look it up online.

Here is what happened: When the U.S. supported Israel in the Yom Kippur war in 1973, the Arab members of OPEC—the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries—they weren't happy.

What did they do?

They banned the sale of crude oil to the United States—cut us off—and it sent shock waves throughout our country. As you might imagine, such was our dependency on imported oil from the Middle East. Despite some strong domestic oil production, we were still relying at that time heavily on imports, and once the supply was cut off, prices quadrupled.

Many gas stations simply couldn't serve the demand, and when they could, they basically made you get an appointment to come fill up your gas tank.

Some States banned neon signs to cut down on energy use, and a number of towns asked their citizens not to put up Christmas lights because of the drain on the grid.

It was a slap across the face, a hard dose of reality that brought America's energy dependence to light and underscored the need to increase our domestic production and resources and wean ourselves off of this dependency—this dangerous dependency on imports.

And that is what we did. Thanks to incredible investment and innovation in the energy sector and something that has come to be known as the shale revolution—named for a way to basically get oil and gas out of a rock—the tide of the energy landscape geopolitically turned in our favor.

These efforts were so successful that in 2015, the U.S. lifted the crude oil export ban that was put in place in the seventies. Back when we were dependent on imports, we said: You can't export it because we need not only what

we can produce, but what we can import.

We lifted that in 2015 because American energy producers were producing so much oil and gas.

And, in fact, rather than import energy, including natural gas, we turned around what were built originally as LNG—liquefied natural gas—import terminals and created export terminals so we could send that low-cost energy to our friends and allies around the world.

But our Democratic colleagues seem to have a short-term memory problem. They seem to have forgotten about our history.

After years of building our energy independence and strengthening our energy security, they want to turn back the clock. The tax hikes they are trying to impose on energy producers would ensure that the United States, once again, is reliant on other countries, like Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela, for our energy needs. The dangers ought to be obvious.

We should never ever put ourselves in a position where we are reliant on any other country for us to keep our lights on, to operate our vehicles, for our small businesses to be able to operate, for us to be able to get electricity from a wall socket when we plug in an appliance.

So we shouldn't be dependent on our adversaries or any other country for our energy needs when we can produce it here in America; and by exporting it to friends and allies around the world, we can actually liberate them.

Recently, I was in on a trip with some Senate colleagues to the Balkans, in a number of countries that used to be part of the old Soviet Union but which are now independent countries, many of which are part of NATO and the European Union.

And one of the things they brought up time and time again is their desire to have a diverse source of energy because they know—they know—that if they depend on Russian gas, that Mr. Putin could turn off the spigot and put them in mortal jeopardy. And that is why it is important for us to be able to continue to export and not be dependent on imported energy ourselves.

President Biden unintentionally demonstrated the hypocrisy of some of his policies earlier this year when he literally begged OPEC to increase production to bring down these prices.

An American President basically shutting down American energy production and begging Russia and Saudi Arabia to please sell us the oil and gas we need so we can bring down prices at the pump—it is unbelievable.

If the President is worried about affordable energy, he needs to stop pushing policies that will drive up these prices.

And it is not just gasoline. It is electricity, you name it.

Well, Texans are already facing high gas prices. Household energy bills, your utility bill, is on the rise. This is not

the time to make it more expensive for families to pay for the energy they need.

As I mentioned, Texas has always been a proud supporter of an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We are recognized for the might of our oil and gas sector for sure, but a lot of folks don't realize we are a leader in renewable energy as well. In fact, we produce one-quarter of all of the wind energy in the United States. If we were a country—and we were once—we would be the fifth largest wind energy producer in the world.

And we have no plans of stopping there. We are also making serious strides in energy innovation through cutting-edge carbon capture and storage projects. That is the answer. It is called innovation. Not more taxes, not more regulations that raise prices, but innovation, things that literally suck carbon out of the environment, deposit it in the ground in some of these injection sites so we can actually produce more oil and gas, and keep the carbon sequestered in the ground permanently.

So we need to find a balance—something that is too often missing here in Washington, DC—between conservation, production, and economic power. That balance will not be found by imposing heavy-handed regulations or taxes that drive up the cost for consumers and that benefit our adversaries.

Like the rest of the reckless tax-and-spending spree, the cost of this energy proposal far, far exceeds its benefits. There is a better way to do this.

The Biden administration has managed to compound the already unprecedented challenges facing our energy sector here in America. American energy keeps America and much of the rest of the world running, and the administration and Congress need to take action to support a strong, post-pandemic recovery, and not get in the way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I come to the floor today to introduce the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2022. Of course, that is the fiscal year that began on October 1.

Like my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, I am thrilled about the great work that has been done over many months to craft spending bills that lift up the ideals of our country and put the needs of workers and families ahead of the desires of special interests.

As chair of the Interior and Environment Subcommittee, I can say that this is certainly true for the Interior bill that Senator MURKOWSKI and I, along with members of the subcommittee, have worked so hard to create.

And I want to especially thank Senator MURKOWSKI and our fellow subcommittee members for their contributions to this bill.

The Interior bill raises some of the more complex and challenging issues facing America, so we are delighted that it has been filed today.

Together, we have crafted a bill that recognizes not only the danger that hotter, more devastating wildfires, longer fire seasons themselves pose, but the dangers of smoke from them. That smoke is making a bigger and bigger impact back home on our crops and on our entertainment because of outdoor venues being shut down and certainly upon people's health. The bill makes critical investments to lessen the peril.

It doubles the funding for hazardous fuels reductions. When you hear that term, you may not be sure what it means. What we are talking about is the buildup of fuels in the forest that make the wildfires so much worse. So it doubles the funding to take out those fuels to \$360 million so the Forest Service can treat more of the highest risk acres of forest lands.

We particularly want to see a concentration of the wild land-urban interface so that the fires are slowed down and can be attacked more aggressively when they are close to our towns.

I will never forget the Labor Day fires of a year ago, where I drove 600 miles up and down our State and never got out of the smoke, and town after town after town was burned to the ground.

This is why we have to invest in reducing the fuels in our forest and making them more fire resilient.

The bill doubles the funding for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration program to \$80 million instead of \$40 million to help fund critical projects that will improve forest landscapes and add to the resiliency while also removing limitations on how many projects could be in each region each year.

You know, the thing about these landscape restoration programs, it brings together the stakeholders from the entire spectrum—from the timber companies, the environmental groups, the local elected officials, the Indian Tribes—to work out a prescription on how to treat the forest, and then that treatment stays out of the courts.

So it brings an end to the timber wars that have so often frustrated so many on all sides while thereby being successful in treating the forests, producing more saw logs for the mill, producing more jobs in the forests, more jobs in the log trucks. So it is a win for fire resiliency; it is a win for jobs; it is a win for our timber industry.

Funding in this bill goes a long way to transitioning to a larger, permanent forest fighting—firefighting—force where firefighters risking their lives now get a minimum pay of at least \$15 per hour. And that doesn't sound like very much, but it is an elevation from the minimum wages of the past.

And it provides \$10 million to create a new EPA grant program to help States, Tribes, local governments, and others prepare for and protect against the hazards of wildfire smoke.

In recent years, whether it is the impact of air quality on those with breathing and health issues or the tourism industry or industries like our wineries and our vineyards, the smoke that can blanket Oregon from fires during fire season has been nearly as devastating as the fires themselves.

Our subcommittee has also crafted a bill that takes on the climate crisis with the seriousness it deserves while we are striving to preserve our lands and our natural wonders. There is no question the planet is getting warmer. Our oceans are getting more acidic as carbon dioxide is transformed into carbonic acid. That is having a big impact on our ecosystems on the Oregon coast. We are facing more extreme weather—droughts, storms, flooding, heat waves—but for too long, we haven't come anywhere close to doing enough to confront this crisis.

We are starting to make changes through the Interior appropriations bill. The bill makes major investments in EPA's climate and enforcement programs, including a 46-percent increase in the clean air and climate program to tackle the crisis, restore clean air capacity, and expand and modernize air quality monitoring. And it provides an extra \$56 million for the Agency's enforcement and compliance efforts and over \$40 million for the Climate Conservation Corps that will create jobs while jump-starting efforts to dramatically expand on-the-ground conservation work to address the impacts of climate change; conserve and restore public lands and public waters; bolster resilience, increase reforestation, protect biodiversity, and improve access to recreation.

There is also \$73 million in new funding to start the process of transitioning the Interior Department from fossil fuel vehicles to zero-emission vehicles. It is something that has to happen across our entire government.

Finally, we have worked together to craft a bill that makes unprecedented, long overdue investments in Tribal communities, in their health systems, their education systems, social services, water resources and infrastructure, and in law enforcement. For far too long, our Tribal communities haven't received the help or the investments that they deserve. In this bill, we are starting to right that wrong.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is getting a 15-percent increase in funding. The Indian Health Service is getting a 21-percent increase in funding. And for the first time, the Indian Health Service is getting an advance appropriations status. What that means is if the government shuts down, we don't shut down the health services for Native Americans. When that happened in the past, that was an egregious failure.

You can't let that happen. This bill puts an end to that, creating peace of mind for everyone that the health service will be there when needed.

We are increasing the Bureau of Indian Education budget by 8 percent, the Native American and Alaska Natives housing programs by 18 percent. We certainly can't make up for centuries' worth of disastrous policy and chronic underfunding when it comes to Indian Country overnight, but I believe this bill and its unprecedented investments should begin to make a large stride toward fulfilling the government's treaty and trust responsibilities, showing Tribal communities that their needs are a priority.

There is a lot more in this bill. The Interior appropriations bill covers a lot of territory. But I wanted to come to the floor to share some of these highlights.

It is important that we get our funding bills for fiscal year 2022 to this floor, to the President's desk, and take all the expertise that has gone into these bills into action by bills that have passed and been implemented.

I want to provide a sense for all my colleagues that the real investments that these bills are making in our Nation are the kind of investments we need to make to ensure strong foundations for families, for our communities, and for our Nation to thrive in the years ahead.

I am grateful for the countless hours of hard work from the Members and, very importantly, from the staff who put these bills together, raising the salient issues, helping to communicate between the Republican side and the Democratic side and the House side and the Senate side and the expertise from the executive branch. The staff work that goes into a bill like this is enormous. So thank you to the staff teams on both the majority and minority side, without whom this bill would not exist.

On my team, we have Melissa Zimmerman, Ryan Hunt, Anthony Sedillo, and Martha Roberts. And on Ranking Member MURKOWSKI's team, we have Emy Lesofski, Nona McCoy, and Lucas Agnew. To each and every one of them, thank you for your tireless efforts. And I must say that the Republican and Democratic team members worked so well together on complex and difficult issues involved in the Interior bill. So I salute them for forging that effort to have a very professional analysis and attitude as we work to solve the challenges facing America.

I look forward to joining with all my colleagues in the Chamber in passing this bill and the other appropriations bills that will put America on a path to a much better future.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today to take a step back really and evaluate the real-life impacts of President Biden's policies. As every in-

coming administration does, promises were made to the American people. That is not surprising. But one of President Biden's first promises was to unite the American people. But as we have seen too often here, he has chosen a path that follows the lead of the Democratic leadership of the House and Senate, which is really a solitary path instead of a path of unity.

So it is fair to ask: Has that agenda resulted in a better life for working families? Has it made us more prosperous, more secure? Has it made us safer?

Well, let's take a look. We can start with what is top of mind for all of our folks across the country, and that is the rising price of everyday goods and services. Every day, men and women go to work, take the kids to school, expecting the predictability that filling up their car will cost a certain amount or that trip to the grocery store will be in the same range. And what do they find? Well, thanks to inflation, fueled in part by excessive government spending to the tune of trillions of dollars—and I am afraid we haven't seen the end of it—Americans are paying higher prices for many of the things they just can't do without. Over the past year, consumer prices have risen 5.4 percent, the largest 1-year jump in 13 years.

So if you are saving up to buy a new or used car or truck, keep saving because it costs more under President Biden. Headed out to the grocery store? Prepare to see larger numbers at the bottom of your receipt, thanks to President Biden. Making monthly rent payments? If it seems higher than last year, that is because it is. The national median rent went up 17 percent since President Biden took office. Well, those numbers don't lie. People see them every day and they are in their bank accounts and in their checkbooks and in the strain of trying to make those things work. These are the real-life consequences of misguided economic policies from the left. Unfortunately, for working-class Americans, it means the only thing we have built back better is the return to soaring inflation and economic misery that many of us remember from the Jimmy Carter years.

Those years also remind us of another problem facing every family, as I mentioned before. That is the rising cost of gas. Digits on the gas pump—they tick up faster and faster every time you fill up, and it isn't because our tanks have gotten bigger, that is for sure. In West Virginia, the average cost of gas compared to this time last year is more than \$1 per gallon. So not only are those trips to the grocery store more expensive, it costs more to get to the grocery store. The White House has insisted that they are working on it, and on behalf of everyone in my State who drives to work, drops their kids off at school, and hops in the car to visit their families, I sure hope they are.

At the same time, it is important to note that on President Biden's first

day of office, he told us all we needed to know about his energy policy and that would be: America last. One of his first acts as President was to cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline, costing thousands of American jobs—union jobs—claiming that it had to be done to combat climate change. Compare that to just a few months later, when President Biden lifted sanctions—yes, he lifted the sanctions—on a Russian gas pipeline, allowing the Nord Stream II project to continue, further empowering Vladimir Putin and threatening the national security of America and our allies in Europe.

These are just a few of the backward moves by this White House that have left us really scratching our heads. And it has only been compounded by Executive action and regulations aimed at stifling the production of energy here in this country. We remember the effects—I certainly do in West Virginia—the effects of this playbook as it originally was created during the Obama years. So it is just a shame that this administration doesn't remember that.

Again, all of this is hitting the consumer—American consumer—hard right as we are approaching our winter months. It is expected that households will see their home heating bills rise 54 percent compared to last winter. And for homes that use natural gas for heat, which I do in my home and I would highly recommend it, they will pay about 30 percent more than they did last year. Families are having to cut back basic necessities just to heat their homes and make ends meet.

Another pledge President Biden made was to build a fair and humane immigration system. He gutted many of the deterrent policies that effectively kept illegal immigration numbers down, such as eliminating the effective “Remain in Mexico” policy; stopping construction of the border wall; and signaling to the whole hemisphere that if you make it to the U.S.-Mexican border, you will be allowed in.

This was reported today, and this has resulted in the highest numbers for a fiscal year that have ever been recorded of border arrests—1.7 million border arrests—the most ever on record. And again, these policies were all done in the name of creating a moral and humane system.

Well, let me tell you, the Senator from Missouri and I took a visit to the border just over the last year, and there was nothing humane about the conditions we saw with overcrowded migrant children facilities in Texas. There was nothing humane about the Haitian immigrants living under a bridge in Del Rio. There is nothing humane about women giving birth, and I believe at last count it was 11 children were born in those conditions. This all happened because they made that dangerous journey to the border believing that if they made it, they would be welcomed in. Well, guess what. They were right because about 12,000 of the Haitian refugees that were under that bridge are in this country right now.

I will take it a step further. There is nothing humane about fueling the disease of addiction millions of Americans battle as deadly drugs flow across our porous border and make their way into our communities. Not addressing an overdose crisis that took 93,000 sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers last year is not humane. You would say: How is this happening? The Border Patrol has got to focus on the human element while more and more drugs can pass through.

As someone representing a State hit hardest by the drug epidemic, I am pleading with President Biden and Vice President HARRIS or whoever is in charge of resolving the self-created border crisis to please do something different—or at least do something.

So this is what the first year of Biden's America looks like: failed policies, broken promises. Americans were promised prosperity, and we have gotten a sampling of socialism. We were promised a secure nation; instead, our borders are open and a humanitarian crisis rages on our southern border. We were promised a repaired reputation on the world stage, and instead we have led from behind and abandoned our own people abroad in Afghanistan. We were promised unity, and instead we heard divisive rhetoric that demonizes half of our country.

The better version of America President Biden was selling, as some of us had feared, was just too good to be true.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Well, Madam President, in just a few short months this year, we have seen a long list of problems develop in the country. Some of them my good friend the Senator from West Virginia just talked about. They range from inflation and debt to the hiring crisis, major disruptions in the supply chain.

When I was home in Missouri last week meeting with all kinds of employers and all kinds of businesses, big and small, everybody said: We can't find workers; we can't get the supplies we need; and we can't keep up with inflation.

What is astonishing to me is the Democrats continue to move forward with their \$3.5 trillion reckless tax-and-spending spree. And, you know, it is easy to take that number and just reduce the length of time you are going to try out all these new policies, and we are going to have to talk about that because that is going to be a big mistake.

In fact, the \$3.5 trillion reckless tax-and-spending spree, I think, easily—if you extend all of the policies through the whole 10 years—becomes a \$5 trillion reckless tax-and-spending spree. If you reduce the policies, it is pretty easy to get it to \$2 trillion.

But if you reduce the policies by just saying, “Instead of 10 years, we are going to have this policy for 3 years;

instead of 5 years, we are going to have this policy for 1 year,” all you have done is put future Congresses in a place where, frankly, Democrats would hope they can't say no.

After a year of the program, they can't say no to the second year of the program; or after 3 years of the program, they can't say no. I wouldn't take a whole lot of solace in the idea that we are going to reduce the number unless we look at the policies behind the number.

Now, some of my colleagues and some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle—the side of the aisle that the Presiding Officer will be sitting on now, the majority side of the aisle—have jumped headlong into this for the most part, but some of our colleagues have really raised some important questions.

For instance, one Senator said recently that expanding social programs while ignoring the millions of open jobs—this is that Senator's quote—“will only feed a dysfunction that could weaken our economic recovery.”

And, of course, that is exactly right. Businesses across the country are trying to hire workers for the more than 10 million job openings. Half the small businesses say they have jobs that they are struggling to fill—one-half of all small businesses.

I was in Farmington, MO, one day last week, and somebody at that roundtable said: I used to say we need to do whatever it takes to get skilled labor, and then occasionally I would say we need to do whatever it takes to get part-time labor. Now I am saying we need to do whatever it takes to get labor.

Because they can't fill the jobs they have.

What I was hearing all over our State, and I think every Senator in this body is hearing the same thing, which is that people can't find the people they need to do the work. Part of the reason that there are empty store shelves is you can't get people to keep those store shelves stocked, but part of the reason is that they can't get things to the stores to put on the shelves.

Everything from shipyards to trucking routes, to supply chains aren't working the way they should right now, and, largely, it is because they don't have the help they need to have.

Now, I am all for looking at our long-term supply chain needs, bringing things closer to our shores when we can do that, but that is not the problem right now. The problem right now is we can't get the things that come to our country to the places that they need to go, nor the things that are made in our country to the places they need to go.

Businesses are trying to keep up with worker demand, but worker shortage is making that impossible. Expanding and creating government pay—government handouts, I think, was what one of our colleagues on the Democratic side had referred to them as—if they are not connected to need or to work

doesn't make sense. We all want to help people who are in need, but we all want to do that in a rational way.

Another Democratic Senator pointed out the danger of all this extra government spending the President wants is going to really drive up inflation. And that is also correct. You can't put hundreds of billions of dollars into the economy and not have that drive up inflation.

If people have money that they wouldn't have otherwise, particularly money we had to borrow to get there or money we had to take out of the functioning economy to get there, that money gets spent, but not in the way that you would want it to be spent to grow an economy and do the best things for individuals and families.

The big spending spree really began in March with a partisan—a totally partisan, one-side-of-the-aisle only—\$2 trillion so-called COVID-19 relief law.

But, frankly, it was a recovery plan when a recovery was well underway. I think the recovery plan slowed down the recovery and made it less likely that people would get back to work. It made it more likely that people would have money to spend that they wouldn't have otherwise and drive inflation.

The expert opinion of economists on both sides of the aisle, who said that what was done in March of this year would assure inflation would rise, it is exactly the same thing they are saying about the bill that is being debated right now. It has already happened, and it is happening. Americans are paying more for everything from groceries to gasoline, to a big purchases, like a new car, or even a used car is selling at a new sudden premium.

Consumer prices have jumped 5.4 percent from 1 year ago. That is not the kind of thing that does anything to help families. In fact, according to Moody's Analytics, a family earning an average income of about \$70,000 is spending an extra \$175 a month on food, fuel, and housing because of what that article referred to as President Biden's inflation.

The White House Chief of Staff the other day, when I asked about inflation, said: Well, inflation was really a "high class problem."

I am not exactly sure what a high class problem means. If it means it is a big problem, that is right. If it means as I think it means, it is a problem that only wealthy Americans have to deal with, that couldn't be right. It is not an upper-class problem or a high-income problem. It is a problem that hits low-income households the hardest.

In the University of Michigan's latest survey of consumers said that only 70 percent of the people in that survey—that consumer survey, only 30 percent of people expect to be financially better off next year than they are right now. Seventy percent thought they would either be worse off or not make any gains at all.

That is not what we were seeing in 2018 and 2019 under the other tax policies where, for the first time in a couple of decades, the distribution of new income was strong at the lowest levels of working families.

The Democratic response is: Let's raise taxes. Let's spend trillions of dollars. Let's pile up more debt.

Or that one theory: No, it won't cost anything because we are paying for it.

Well, obviously, if you are paying for it, it had to cost something.

And how are you paying for it?

You are paying for it by taking things out of the economy in one hand and shoving them back into the economy with another.

At one point, one of our friends on the other side of the aisle expressed his opinion, as he put it, that "any expansion of social programs must be targeted to those in need and not expanded beyond what is fiscally possible."

That is, of course, the right position. All of us want to help people in need, but we don't want to expand that group beyond what you can fiscally deal with and not harm their own opportunities in the economy.

This reckless tax-and-spending spree includes a number of ways on how to expand social welfare programs and to cover people with high incomes. They are trying to create permanent, expanded subsidies for ObamaCare insurance plans. Now, we clearly have subsidies. They are clearly permanent. They are clearly substantial. But the bill wants to not only make the subsidies higher, but it wants them to be higher for more people who have higher incomes to start with.

They are also talking about tuition-free community college. Well, there is almost no community college in America today that is not already tuition-free for those people who we have decided are in the greatest need. That is what Pell grants are all about.

There is no community college in Missouri, and few community colleges anywhere in the country, where the full Pell grant doesn't pay all tuition, all books, and all fees with a little money left over to travel back and forth to the campus.

I am a big supporter of Pell grants. I worked a few years ago to go back to where we have year-round Pell grants. So if you are going to school and something is working for you, you can stay in school. You don't have to take a summer off and get a different job and then think you are coming back in the fall to find out that that just didn't work out.

We have solved this problem. If we haven't solved it adequately, well, let's increase the Pell grant amount. And if that doesn't do the job, why don't we increase the amount of family income you can have and still qualify for the maximum Pell grant or some other portion of the Pell grant?

There is an obvious solution here. As a matter of fact, in the markup of the

Labor-HHS bill, I think we added \$400 to the annual Pell grant this year, which is a pretty substantial increase in that grant. The government already spends more than \$28 billion every year for Pell grants.

If you really want to make higher education expensive, make it free. Go to every higher education institution in America, starting with community colleges, and say: We are going to make this free.

I was a university president for 4 years, and we have all seen what happens as we increased the government support for higher education.

I was the first person in my family to graduate from college. I am a big advocate for higher education, but everybody needs to have a stake in the game. You value what you pay for. You value what you have a commitment to. Free usually doesn't get you where you want to get. We don't want to duplicate what we are already doing, and we don't want to create free programs for people who don't need free programs.

Finally, obviously, a lot of emphasis and unease on these tax increases. One of my colleagues on the other side said our Tax Code "should not weaken our global competitiveness or the ability of millions of small businesses to compete."

That is undeniably true.

The 2017 Republican-led tax law followed a consensus that we need to bring the U.S. in line with our global competitors. Let's not get out of line and make it harder for us to compete. We were on an incredible trajectory of job creation and pay for all of the working-class families that had been left out of the system for too long. We could easily wipe out those gains with a corporate tax rate increase that loses our competitive advantage to people who we don't want to lose it to.

Democrats are also aiming several of their tax hikes at small businesses and family farms. They plan to hike, we hear, those taxes by 57 percent of the top marginal rate, from 29.6 to 46.4. There are a lot of concerns with the legislation that President Biden and his allies in Congress are trying to push through.

The American economy is struggling against the headwinds of an, frankly, administration that has done so much to create on its own. This terrible legislation would just make everything worse. Let's not work on one side only to make everything worse. Let's see what we can do to work together to make everything better.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I so appreciate the remarks of my colleague from Missouri, and it sounds as if he is hearing from his constituents in Missouri the same thing that I am hearing in Tennessee.

As a matter of fact, I held a telephone townhall last night. Thirty thousand of our citizens from Upper



East Tennessee were on this call, and to say that they are unhappy would be to put it mildly. That really is an understatement. They are angry. They are frustrated. They are exhausted with what this administration is doing. They are angry with how the Federal Government is responding to a host of issues.

They really took President Biden at his word for his Build Back Better. They expected that. But that is not what they have gotten. He has made a mess of it, and, indeed, what you have is a "Build Back Broke" agenda.

And my colleague from Missouri really laid that out. It is "Build Back Broke." That is what they are bringing forward. And that agenda of President Biden's and the Democratic Party has really destroyed a lot of the hopes and the dreams and some of the renewed prosperity of Tennesseans whose job isn't to study the economy but to move it forward.

They do the heavy lift every single day.

Last night, I spoke with businessowners who feel like they are under attack by this administration and their economic policy. The cost of doing business is going up. They are bleeding customers because they have less disposable income because of inflation, because of the price at the pump.

Supply chains are collapsing around them. It is difficult to get raw materials, like lumber and steel. They have no confidence at all in the administration's willingness or ability to solve this problem. They feel as if the administration does not give the ripping flip about what happens to them in Upper East Tennessee. This administration has forgotten them.

On top of everything else, these vaccine mandates—now, we are hearing a lot about that, and we are hearing from people who know they are going to lose their job. Many times, these are women who are the sole source—the sole source—of income for their families. These families are very concerned about how they are going to handle inflation, collapsing supply lines, how they are going to handle some of the broken social policies that this administration and their allies are trying to sneak into law.

So far this year, we have seen our colleagues across the aisle and down at the White House try to force through provisions of the Green New Deal that would bankrupt your average family and destroy economic development opportunities in rural areas.

We know that it is expected that the cost to heat your home this winter is going to increase 30 percent. Now, how do you handle that when you have lost your job? Do you just sit there and freeze? And you are losing your job because of a Federal mandate that says you have to go get a shot in order to keep a job that you love, in order to put food on the table to feed your family. This makes no sense.

I also heard from parents very upset about critical race theory and the way

this administration is trying to hijack education and force this curriculum, force cradle-to-grave socialism—daylight to dark, 24/7, depend on the Federal Government.

One of the things that frightens Tennesseans the most and came up regularly on our telephone townhall was the broken border policies. I have said it before; I will say it again. This fear has nothing to do with racism and xenophobia. This administration and my colleagues across the aisle need to get that point through their heads.

Tennesseans are afraid because they look at the border. What they are seeing is vulnerability. They see the drugs coming across that border because the drugs end up in their streets: fentanyl, meth, heroin.

Every town is a border town. Every State is a border State because Joe Biden's border policy is: Open up the border. Hang out the "Y'all come sign," and give everybody a plane ticket to wherever they are going in the country. And, oh, by the way, if the commercial flights are full, don't worry about it. We will go charter you a jet and send you under the cloak of darkness into Chattanooga or into Knoxville or into West Chester County. That is what concerns Tennesseans.

They are seeing what is happening with sex trafficking, with human trafficking. They are afraid of what cartels are doing because the cartels are saying: Thank you, Joe Biden. The door is open. We were not fearful. We are setting up distribution centers on U.S. soils.

That is right, the cartels, setting up their distribution centers. Why? Because Joe Biden is weak and feckless and doesn't stand up to protect the southern border.

There is another thing that they were quite exercised about last night, and it is the issue of election integrity. Indeed, I had a Tennessean call me at 6:45 this morning, and he said: Marsha, you have got to be kidding me. You mean they want to pass a bill that says anybody can go vote, that you can go vote the day of the election, that you don't have to show an ID to vote?

He said: You know, I recently had to show not only a vaccine card but my ID to prove that was my vaccine card to go sit inside at the In-N-Out Burger.

This is why people are so frustrated with Joe Biden. This is why they are so frustrated with the Democrats.

What are they looking for? They are looking for legislators to have some backbone, to stand up and stand for freedom, not to kowtow to a socialist agenda, because they know if the Democratic leadership and Joe Biden had their way with one vote, they would take one vote, and they would push to a socialist agenda.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Minnesota.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwith-

standing rule XXII, at 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, October 21, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Lin, Parker, and Perez nominations, in that order; and that if cloture is invoked on any of the nominations, all postcloture time will be considered expired at 1:45 p.m.; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Lin nomination, the confirmation vote occur at 1:45 p.m. on Thursday; finally, that if cloture is invoked on either the Parker or Perez nominations, the confirmation votes begin at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, October 25.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### RECOGNIZING MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Middlebury College, in my State of Vermont, is known worldwide as an outstanding educational institution. What is less well-known is that the college is also a leader in addressing climate change.

The college first became carbon neutral not by simply purchasing carbon credits, but by doing the hard work of actually becoming carbon neutral, including the implementation of 123 individual efficiency projects that are collectively saving the college nearly \$1 million a year. With that work complete, they set about securing their energy entirely from renewable sources—first, with one of the largest biodigesters in Vermont and, now, with a 5 megawatt solar array, that will provide 30 percent of the college's electricity.

The project includes energy storage, which will benefit the electric grid by spreading out when the power enters the grid. Perhaps more importantly, that stored energy will also serve as a source of emergency power for a nearby hospital, Porter Medical Center. The project also involves two Vermont companies: Encore Renewable and Green Mountain Power.

Earlier this month, it was an honor to join the groundbreaking for the project, where Middlebury College President Laurie Patton shared her vision for how to get to a better climate future. All should read her impressive remarks at the event, and I ask that a copy of them be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:



October 12, 2021.

Good morning.

I am so happy to be here with you today, and it's my honor to share this podium on a beautiful autumn morning with my friends and colleagues Chief Don Stephens, Senator Patrick Leahy, Chad Farrell of Encore Renewable Energy, Matt Murphy of Green Backer Capital, Mari McClure of Green Mountain Power, Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray, Middlebury Select board chairman Brian Carpenter, and the College's own Simone Ameer. Senator Leahy, as a professor of religion I already made arrangements with the heavens for this weather—so you didn't need to make the law!

We come together today as responsible stewards of this planet and of this place we are blessed to call home—Ndakinna [in-DAH-keen-AH], the town of Middlebury, the county of Addison, the state of Vermont.

We gather to recognize the generations who came before us in making this very place what it is today, and we do so in service of the generations to come, to ensure that Ndakinna [in-DAH-keen-AH], Middlebury, Addison County, and Vermont remain places where the health of our environment is paramount, and where our people can come together in concert, rather than competition, to maintain a livable community and planet.

When we at Middlebury announced our Energy 2028 initiative three years ago, we laid out an ambitious ten-year plan, pledging that in a decade's time we would sharply reduce our energy consumption as an institution; reduce and then eliminate our investment in fossil fuels; craft a large educational initiative to continue our research and scholarship into climate change—and, in perhaps our boldest promise, rely completely on renewable energy sources to power our Vermont campus.

The solar array project on which we break ground today takes us one large step closer to realizing this goal, as it is expected to provide nearly one-third of the energy needed to power our campus. This groundbreaking comes on the heels of the start-up of the largest anaerobic digester in the Northeastern United States at the Goodrich Farm in nearby Salisbury, another local project and partnership that is supplying renewable natural gas to the College and community.

Each of these efforts—indeed, all of our efforts to meet our Energy 2028 goals—are collaborative by design, because we all have a stake in the outcome. Just as our plan was crafted in a spirit of independence, in which no individual part could work without the other, the same can be said for our partnerships. Remove any one of us, and we're not here today. Remove any one of us, and we're not here today.

In a few weeks, on a platform a little bit bigger than this one and with just a few more people in attendance, the United Nations Climate Change Conference will convene in Glasgow, Scotland. The comparisons in scope between that and this, here and there, may cause some to peer at us today and wonder: what's the point? We're so small!

As I have written and spoken in the past, a local initiative such as this one is exactly the point, the point being that local wisdom and local practices are the ideal conditions to help put out the fire that is consuming our planet. The sun is one of the oldest symbols known to humans; it is in the earliest cave paintings tens of thousands of years ago, and in the earliest spoken prayers of more than 3000 years ago. It is only fitting that we should return, indeed come full circle, to the sun to heal our planet.

We are so blessed to call this place home.

The Green Mountains rest behind me.

In my mind's eye, I can already envision the sheep that will graze beneath the solar arrays, managing the vegetation growing in these fields.

And up above, in a sky that Sabra Field herself could have painted, a golden light will not only illuminate the beauty of our surroundings but will allow us to take another critical step toward building a sustainable future.

Thank you, everyone of you, for your help in building a new world.

LAURIE L. PATTON,  
President, Middlebury.

#### TRIBUTE TO ADELINE DRUART

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, these days, it is not uncommon for people to frequently change careers, companies, or job paths. At one iconic Vermont entity, though, Vermont Creamery, president and chief executive officer Adeline Druart has dedicated more than 17 years to growing and expanding the company's product line and brand. She was recently featured on the Positive Enterprise Podcast, and hers is a story in which all Vermonters can find pride and motivation.

The cheese and butter that Vermont Creamery produces is some of the best in the world. As a Certified B Corporation, Vermont Creamery follows a long Vermont legacy of investing in environmental sustainability, local supply chains, and worker satisfaction. These investments have clearly paid off. In 2017, Vermont Creamery was acquired by Land O'Lakes, a century-old farmer-owned cooperative, and has continued on an impressive path of conscious growth. With Land O'Lakes' support, Vermont Creamery has expanded its facilities nearly 40 percent and is now a recognizable brand in grocery stores across the country. In 2020, the company supported our community through the pandemic, donating 12,000 pounds of food to hungry Vermonters, providing hazard pay to their employees, and advocating for universal childcare for Vermont's working families. They also converted their Websterville-based facility to run on 100-percent renewable energy. And these changes have only underlined their belief that consciously crafted products made with the best ingredients just taste better. Today, the beloved Vermont Creamery makes the No. 1 best-selling goat cheese in the country.

Adeline Druart is responsible for so much of this impressive growth. In the early 2000s, Adeline, then a student from France, came to Vermont Creamery to complete an internship for her master's degree. She just couldn't stay away. Adeline worked her way up the ranks at the creamery, before being named president and CEO in 2015. In that role, she has shown exactly what tenacity and hard work, when paired with a people-first approach to business, can do. The mother of two young sons, Adeline has reinforced Vermont Creamery's original family-oriented

culture while steering the company's growth. She is an inspiration to me, and I am so proud that she calls Vermont home.

Vermont is home to some of the finest agriculture, wood-based, and other products in the country. We feature many of these at the annual Taste of Vermont here in Washington, a tradition I hope to return to next year. At the helm of so many of these Vermont companies are people like Adeline. It is in these hard-working and creative leaders that we can find great hope for Vermont's economic recovery and vibrant future.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO STEVE LEVESQUE

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the outstanding career of a leader in economic development in the State of Maine. Steve Levesque, of Greenville, ME, is retiring after 41 years of professional experience in the areas of economic and community progress, land use planning, and environmental services in both the private and public sectors, including when I was Governor as commissioner of Maine's Department of Economic and Community Development. Most recently, Steve has made an indelible mark in his position as executive director of Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority, MRRA. From his first days in economic and community development in Maine, Steve has held a number of leadership positions in which he has led and advocated tirelessly for local, regional, and State economies with consistent messages of the quality of the business environment in Maine alongside our quality of life as Mainers.

In 2005, there were indications that the Naval Air Station Brunswick, NASB, would be disestablished and Steve, at that time, led the Brunswick Local Redevelopment Authority, charged with overseeing the successful completion of the Reuse Master Plan for NASB. He has been MRRA's only executive director since its formation in 2008. In 2011, when NASB officially closed, there were persistent doomsday forecasts about the hole that was left behind. Steve brought his own brand of fervency to MRRA to realize a dream of the adaptive reuse of the former base, now known as Brunswick Landing. He started by assembling a passionate and hard-working team and began carefully cultivating what would become critical and dedicated partnerships, developed over the years with so many groups: the Navy, the towns of Brunswick and Topsham, the State of Maine, all of Maine's congressional delegation, the FAA, and especially the impressive list of businesses and private developers who have invested in the vision to convert a former Navy base into an economic engine that

today holds more than 2,400 jobs, surpassing the \$150 million former Navy payroll.

When you read the list of other benchmarks at Brunswick Landing, over only 10 years—the creation of TechPlace, a manufacturing business incubator with 35 resident businesses; attraction of over a half billion dollars in private sector capital investment; property sales to more than 20 new property owners, including more than 650 units of workforce housing; more than \$150 million in new valuation and \$3 million in annual property taxes generated for the Towns of Brunswick and Topsham; more than \$40 million in upgrades to Brunswick Executive Airport's—BXM—infrastructure and buildings; more than \$100 million invested in new building construction and infrastructure projects owned by MRRA; creation of Brunswick Renewable Energy Center, including ownership of former Navy electrical grid with 3.5-megawatt load and 2 megawatts of on-site renewable electricity generation; 10 percent annual growth in air operations, based aircraft, and aviation fuel sales at BXM; environmental stewardship and wildlife habitat preservation, including transfer of more than 1,200 acres of open space and trails to the town of Brunswick and local land trust—it is no wonder Steve's leadership has been recognized, not once but twice, as a recipient of the Association of Defense Contractor's Community Leadership Award as well as by many other State development organizations. I join them wholeheartedly in recognizing Steve for demonstrating innovation and excellence in his work.

Even in his volunteer time, Steve serves on a number of industry and economic development boards, including the Loring Development Authority of Maine, Moosehead Lake Region Economic Development Corporation, Owls Head Transportation Museum, and the Maine Spaceport Leadership Council, to name a few. Steve has also served his country in the U.S. Marine Corps as an aircraft mechanic.

Due to Steve's commitment to economic development and ability to secure funding for a variety of initiatives throughout the years, there has been continued high quality service for new and expanding businesses here in Maine. His ability to coordinate programs and foster partnerships were critical factors in his success, whether it be at the local, State, or national level. As a champion of economic development, I join with his colleagues, friends, and the people of Maine in thanking Steve for his unwavering service to the economic development of our State.●

#### TRIBUTE TO DEPUTY SHERIFF JOHN MINER

● Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I wish to honor and recognize a true hero from Phillipsburg, KS, Deputy Sheriff

John Miner. On November 4, 2020, Deputy Miner responded to an accident caused by a semi-truck colliding with multiple vehicles in Long Island, KS. What was already a scary situation on its own turned worse when fuel from the semi began leaking and ignited shortly after.

A raging fire quickly started, and suddenly, bystanders realized two toddlers—a 4-year-old and 2-year-old—were stuck in one of the cars caught in the accident. Without a second thought, Deputy Miner performed his duty to protect and serve by leaping straight into the whipping fire to rescue those two children. With just a pocketknife, he was able to cut through the seatbelts trapping them and pulled them out miraculously unharmed. Deputy Miner, however, suffered second- and third-degree burns which required skin grafts. Thankfully, he has since recovered from his injuries.

This valiant story caught the attention of many in Kansas and, now, around the Nation, as Deputy Miner has been awarded the Carnegie medal for an extraordinary act of heroism. This award is bestowed on a select few each year for showing true bravery and courage in the face of danger. Deputy Miner is absolutely deserving of this award after rescuing those two children last year from certain death.

I want to thank this brave officer for being so courageous to dive headfirst into peril. As the son of a police chief, I know the risks our men and women in blue take on each day, and they are the most admirable citizens for continually working to ensure our safety. Deputy Miner has shown what true valor looks like, and Phillipsburg is safer because of him. I ask now that my colleagues show this same admiration and recognition for Deputy Miner and that he may stay safe protecting his community.●

#### RECOGNIZING SOUTH LEBANON

● Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the designation of South Lebanon as an Official City in Ohio. In accordance with section 703.06 of the Revised Code of the State of Ohio, a municipality that reaches 5,000 residents in the State of Ohio, automatically becomes a city. Since 2000, the municipality of South Lebanon has grown 151 percent and has reached a population of 6,384.

The growing population of South Lebanon also comes with a rich history. South Lebanon is the oldest town in Warren County, OH, and was also deemed one of the most important towns on the Little Miami River in the late 1700s. In its early days of settlement, it was a stopping place for many pioneers who were venturing across the country in search of a new life. Today, that same town that was a place of possibility and refuge to so many early pioneers has become a booming economic power, bringing new jobs, good

schools, and a strong sense of community.

I am proud to see South Lebanon be recognized for its growth and perseverance as it continues to expand, making Ohio a great place to live and work.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Swann, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:08 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1029. An act to Waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans' special events at war memorials on land administered by the National Park Service in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4089. An act to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and disseminate best practices for rental companies and dealers to report suspicious behavior to law enforcement agencies at a point of sale of a covered rental vehicle to prevent and mitigate acts of terrorism using motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4369. An act to amend the 21st Century Cures Act to provide for designation of institutions of higher education that provide research, data, and leadership on advanced and continuous pharmaceutical manufacturing as National Centers of Excellence in Advanced and Continuous Pharmaceutical Manufacturing, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 206 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11116), and the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Speaker appoints the following individuals on the part of the House of Representatives to the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Ms. Sharyl Davis of San Francisco, California, to a 3-year term, and Ms. Renee Rodriguez-Betan-court of Edinburg, Texas, to a 2-year term.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1029. An act to Waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans' special events at war memorials on land administered by the National Park Service in

the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4089. An act to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and disseminate best practices for rental companies and dealers to report suspicious behavior to law enforcement agencies at the point of sale of a covered rental vehicle to prevent and mitigate acts of terrorism using motor vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4369. An act to amend the 21st Century Cures Act to provide for designation of institutions of higher education that provide research, data, and leadership on advanced and continuous pharmaceutical manufacturing as National Centers of Excellence in Advanced and Continuous Pharmaceutical Manufacturing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 3005. A bill establishing appropriate thresholds for certain budget points of order in the Senate, and for other purposes.

S. 3006. A bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to extend the discretionary spending limits for fiscal years 2022 through 2031.

S. 3007. A bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to extend the discretionary spending limits.

S. 3008. A bill to establish the Federal Rainy Day Fund to control emergency spending.

S. 3009. A bill to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to remove the prohibition on States and territories against lowering their taxes.

S. 3010. A bill to cap noninterest Federal spending as a percentage of potential GDP to right-size the Government, grow the economy, and balance the budget.

### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2407. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13694 with respect to significant malicious cyber-enabled activities; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2408. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision to Restrictions on Shipment or Use for Human Blood and Blood Components Exceptions; Technical Amendment" (Docket No. FDA-2021-N-0011) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 4, 2021; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-2409. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report to Congress on the Physicians' Comparability Allowance Program"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2410. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, De-

partment of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 4, 2021; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2411. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance and Mitigation Planning Regulations; Correction" (RIN1660-AA96) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 4, 2021; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2412. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Visas: Documentation of Nonimmigrants under the Immigration and Nationality Act; Validity of Visa" (RIN1400-AE82) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 4, 2021; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2413. A communication from the Agency Representative, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "International Trademark Classification Changes" (RIN0651-AD57) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 6, 2021; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2414. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Schedule for Rating Disabilities; The Genitourinary Diseases and Conditions" (RIN2900-AQ71) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 6, 2021; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-2415. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Schedule for Rating Disabilities; The Cardiovascular System" (RIN2900-AQ67) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 6, 2021; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-2416. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "VA Acquisition Regulation: Loan Guaranty and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Programs" (RIN2900-AQ76) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 6, 2021; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-2417. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "VA Acquisition Regulation: Definitions, Solicitation Provisions and Contract Clauses, and Forms" (RIN2900-AR30) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 6, 2021; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-2418. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "VA Acquisition Regulation: Simplified Procedures for Health-Care Resources"

(RIN2900-AQ78) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 6, 2021; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-2419. A communication from the Deputy Chief, Office of Economics and Analytics, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Auction of Construction Permits for Low Power Television and TV Translator Stations; Notice and Filing Requirements, Minimum Opening Bids, Upfront Payments, and Other Procedures for Auction 111; Bidding Scheduled to Begin February 23, 2022" ((AU Docket No. 21-284) (DA 21-1176)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 4, 2021; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

### EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Ms. CANTWELL for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

\*Meera Joshi, of Pennsylvania, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

\*Amitabha Bose, of New Jersey, to be Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration.

\*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration nomination of Nancy A. Hann, to be Rear Admiral.

\*Coast Guard nomination of Rear Adm. James M. Kelly, to be Rear Admiral (Upper Half).

\*Mohsin Raza Syed, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation.

\*Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer, of the District of Columbia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Transportation.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation I report favorably the following nomination list which was printed in the RECORD on the date indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that this nomination lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

\*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Jason C. Aleksak and ending with Christopher L. Wright, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on September 14, 2021.

By Mr. TESTER for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

\*James D. Rodriguez, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training.

\*Guy T. Kiyokawa, of Hawaii, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Enterprise Integration).

\*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first

and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mr. KELLY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. KING, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. OSSOFF, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. WARNER, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH):

S. 3013. A bill to require the evaluation and standardization of suicide prevention efforts by the Department of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 3014. A bill to establish the Next Generation Telecommunications Council, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 3015. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to submit to Congress each year a national science and technology strategy, to require the Director to complete quadrennial science and technology reviews, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. COONS):

S. 3016. A bill to address out-of-pocket inequities related to military service uniforms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BOOKER, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 3017. A bill to expand the provision and availability of dental care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MARSHALL (for himself, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 3018. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish requirements with respect to the use of prior authorization under Medicare Advantage plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 3019. A bill to require the United States Postal Service to designate a single, unique ZIP code for particular communities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 3020. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to modify the eligibility of veterans for treatment as a low-income family for purposes of enrollment in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs and to guarantee health care benefits for veterans enrolled in such system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 3021. A bill to provide non-medical counseling services for military families; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 3022. A bill to subject certain private funds to joint and several liability with respect to the liabilities of firms acquired and controlled by those funds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 3023. A bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KAINE, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 3024. A bill to amend the State Justice Institute Act of 1984 to provide technical assistance and training to State and local courts to improve the constitutional and equitable enforcement of fines and fees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 3025. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 3026. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to ensure that public institutions of higher education eschew policies that improperly constrain the expressive rights of students, and to ensure that private institutions of higher education are transparent about, and responsible for, their chosen speech policies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 3027. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 66 Meserole Avenue in Brooklyn, New York, as the "Joseph R. Lentol Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 3028. A bill to authorize the Attorney General to make grants to, and enter into cooperative agreements with, States and units of local government to develop, implement, or expand 1 or more programs to provide medication-assisted treatment to individuals who have opioid use disorder and are incarcerated within the jurisdictions of the States or units of local government; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LUJÁN:

S. 3029. A bill to amend section 230(c) of the Communications Act of 1934 to remove immunity for providers of interactive computer services for certain claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 3030. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to issue a notice to the public regarding each enforcement action under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 that results in large penalties or where multiple violations or repeated other-than-serious violations are present; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. KELLY, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. BURR):

S. 3031. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to modify certain allotments under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 3032. A bill to require certain manufactured goods introduced for sale in the United States to have a domestic value content of more than 50 percent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WARNOCK (for himself and Mr. OSSOFF):

S. 3033. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3900 Crown Road Southwest in Atlanta, Georgia, as the "John R. Lewis Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY:

S. 3034. A bill making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

## SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. Res. 424. A resolution commemorating the 80th anniversary of the dedication of Sheppard Air Force Base and the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. ERNST, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. Res. 425. A resolution recognizing the importance of protecting freedom of speech, thought, and expression at institutions of higher education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

## ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 172

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 172, a bill to authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes.

S. 868

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 868, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five-month waiting period for disability insurance benefits under such title and waive the 24-month waiting period for Medicare eligibility for individuals with Huntington's disease.

S. 1042

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1042, a bill to prevent maternal mortality and serve maternal

morbidity among Black pregnant and postpartum individuals and other underserved populations, to provide training in respectful maternity care, to reduce and prevent bias, racism, and discrimination in maternity care settings, and for other purposes.

S. 1115

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1115, a bill to prohibit drilling in the outer Continental Shelf, to prohibit coal leases on Federal land, and for other purposes.

S. 1151

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1151, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a presumption of service connected disability for certain veterans who served in Palomares, Spain, and for other purposes.

S. 1383

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1383, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop best practices for the establishment and use of behavioral intervention teams at schools, and for other purposes.

S. 1544

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1544, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to streamline enrollment under the Medicaid program of certain providers across State lines, and for other purposes.

S. 1850

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1850, a bill to preserve the memorials to chaplains at Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

S. 1986

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1986, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 to expand and expedite access to cardiac rehabilitation programs and pulmonary rehabilitation programs under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 2102

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2102, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide mammography screening for veterans who served in locations associated with toxic exposure.

S. 2215

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr.

KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2215, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness programs.

S. 2266

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 2266, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the historic rehabilitation tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 2400

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2400, a bill to establish a process for the Board on Geographic Names to review and revise offensive names of Federal land units, to create an advisory committee to recommend Federal land unit names to be reviewed by the Board, and for other purposes.

S. 2434

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2434, a bill to provide tax incentives that support local newspapers and other local media, and for other purposes.

S. 2675

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2675, a bill to amend the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to increase appropriations to Restaurant Revitalization Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 2700

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2700, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to improve the detection, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues among public safety officers, and for other purposes.

S. 2702

At the request of Mr. LUJÁN, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) were added as cosponsors of S. 2702, a bill to protect the voting rights of Native American and Alaska Native voters.

S. 2716

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2716, a bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to establish country of origin labeling requirements for beef, and for other purposes.

S. 2750

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi

(Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2750, a bill to amend the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 to establish a precision agriculture loan program, and for other purposes.

S. 2762

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2762, a bill to amend title III of the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to award grants to eligible entities to carry out construction or modernization projects designed to strengthen and increase capacity within the specialized pediatric health care infrastructure, and for other purposes.

S. 2806

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2806, a bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to select and implement landscape-scale forest restoration projects, to assist communities in increasing their resilience to wildfire, and for other purposes.

S. 2854

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2854, a bill to allow for the transfer and redemption of abandoned savings bonds.

S. 2875

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2875, a bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish the Cyber Incident Review Office in the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

S. 2900

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2900, a bill to suspend the enforcement of certain civil liabilities of Federal employees and contractors during a lapse in appropriations, and for other purposes.

S. 2902

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2902, a bill to modernize Federal information security management, and for other purposes.

S. 2918

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2918, a bill to keep children safe and protect their interests on the internet, and for other purposes.

S. 2934

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2934, a bill to amend the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 to impose limitations on the authority of the President to adjust imports that are determined to threaten to impair national security, and for other purposes.

S. 2937

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2937, a bill to authorize humanitarian assistance and civil society support, promote democracy and human rights, and impose targeted sanctions with respect to human rights abuses in Burma, and for other purposes.

S. 2945

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2945, a bill to include sexual assault and aggravated sexual violence in the definition of aggravated felonies under the Immigration and Nationality Act in order to expedite the removal of aliens convicted of such crimes.

S. 3011

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3011, a bill to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to allow States and local governments to use coronavirus relief funds provided under the American Rescue Plan Act for infrastructure projects, improve the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund, provide Tribal governments with more time to use Coronavirus Relief Fund payments, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 10, a joint resolution to repeal the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq, and for other purposes.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 3022. A bill to subject certain private funds to joint and several liability with respect to the liabilities of firms acquired and controlled by those funds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of legislation that I have recently joined Senator WARREN in introducing. It is called the Stop Wall Street Looting Act, and it concerns some of the practices and the business model of what I would describe as predatory private equity firms.

Now, before I dive into the details, I want to say that there are very good

private equity companies that invest in the businesses they have purchased and the communities and the workers.

But, unfortunately, this is something that I have firsthand knowledge of, the impact of predatory private equity businesses on workers and communities in my home State of Wisconsin. Several historic Wisconsin companies have been driven into bankruptcy or had their facilities moved overseas by the private equity funds and companies that acquired them.

The first company that I want to talk about is ShopKo. For those who weren't in the ShopKo footprint in the United States, ShopKo is a retailer that was founded in 1961 in Ashwaubenton, WI. ShopKo was bought by a private equity firm, after many profitable years of existence, back in 2005. The firm was Sun Capital Partners.

Sun Capital immediately executed what is known as a sale-leaseback. A sale-leaseback is a textbook private equity maneuver in which the fund sells the company's real estate right out from under it. Real estate and the facilities were the most major asset that ShopKo had.

Certainly, they also had inventory and workers, but they owned the real estate, and this private equity firm basically sold ShopKo's 351 locations with hundreds of millions of dollars, and they were sold to a company that would lease the land and buildings back to ShopKo.

Sun Capital promised to reinvest the proceeds of the sale back into the company, but instead it paid out cash to itself in the form of dividends and management fees. Not only was ShopKo prevented from using its cash to reinvest, it was also loaded up with \$200 million more in additional debt to fund even more payouts to Sun Capital executives.

After years of being starved of investment, ShopKo was forced into bankruptcy and liquidation in 2019. The 3,000 Wisconsin workers were promised severance pay in exchange for working through the company's final days.

I mean, if you think about that, you have a retail store. You don't want everybody to—the day they find out that store is ultimately going to close—to go out and find other jobs or you don't have the way to wind down your business. So they were promised severance pay in exchange for working through the company's final days. But when the time came to pay the workers, Sun Capital said it didn't have any money.

When I met with these ShopKo workers, I remember meeting Kristi Van Beckum. She said to me:

I always felt proud to work at ShopKo because it was a Wisconsin-based company and it invested a lot in the community. But I saw how Sun Capital sold out ShopKo's properties and [literally] destroyed the company, all for their own benefit. They made millions while I didn't even get the severance I was promised. Sun Capital ran a company we loved into the ground.

More recently, I visited with workers at Hufcor, a company that has oper-

ated in Janesville, WI, for over 120 years. In 2017, the manufacturer was acquired by a private equity firm called OpenGate Capital.

Wisconsinites are sadly already familiar with OpenGate. This is an L.A.-based private equity fund that bankrupted another Wisconsin firm, Golden Guernsey Dairy, back in 2013, only 2 years after acquiring it, laying off hundreds of workers in Waukesha, WI.

Dairy workers showed up one day to find the doors locked. They were given no notice of their layoff, and they had to fight OpenGate for 8 years just to get their back pay.

This past summer, OpenGate notified the 166 workers at Hufcor that their jobs would be terminated, and the workers soon learned that the manufacturing operations would be moved to Monterrey, Mexico.

When I visited with the workers this summer, I learned this from Michelle, who had worked for Hufcor for 23 years. She told me she is anxious about what training she might need to get another job that will pay what she earned at Hufcor.

Then I also heard from Jesse. He was diagnosed with cancer 2 years ago, and he depends upon the health benefit provided by Hufcor for his treatment.

These workers had great benefits because of their representation by the Communications Workers of America union and because of their employment at Hufcor, but they were left with an uncertain future because OpenGate has decided to move their jobs to Mexico.

These stories illustrate the devastation that the predatory private equity business model has wrought on my State. These workers deserve better. We need to rip up private equity's predatory playbook that enriches looters, but leaves workers with nothing but pink slips.

I was proud to work with Senator WARREN to introduce the aptly named Stop Wall Street Looting Act. This legislation will prevent private equity firms from enriching themselves by starving businesses of investment and running them into bankruptcy or shipping their jobs overseas. This bold reform will help rewrite the rules of our economy and protect workers from the predatory practices so that we can start to reward hard work, not just wealth.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the stories from my State, and I look forward to working to pass this important legislation.



## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

## SENATE RESOLUTION 424—COMMEMORATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE AND THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF THE EURO-NATO JOINT JET PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM

Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 424

Whereas, in 1940, Major General Rush B. Lincoln, Commandant of United States Army Air Corps Technical Schools, surveyed the sites surrounding the city of Wichita Falls, Texas for a future training school;

Whereas, 80 years ago, Sheppard Air Force Base began as Sheppard Field and opened as a United States Army Air Corps training facility on 300 acres of land in Wichita Falls, named after former United States Senator John Morris Sheppard;

Whereas, during World War II, Sheppard Field trained more than 44,000 mechanics and 445,000 basic trainees, playing a vital role in the development of airpower for defeating the Axis powers;

Whereas, after serving as an Army Air Force separation center following the end of World War II, Sheppard Field was inactivated in August of 1946;

Whereas, on August 1, 1948, Sheppard Field was reactivated by the Department of the Air Force to enhance basic training and was dedicated as Sheppard Air Force Base;

Whereas, by 1953, the base qualified more than 80,000 trained aircraft maintainers and served as the home for 2 percent of all airmen;

Whereas Sheppard Air Force Base adapted and matured alongside the United States Armed Forces by becoming the home of missile maintenance training in 1955;

Whereas, from 1959 to 1962, Sheppard Air Force Base hosted the 4245th Strategic Wing and, from 1962 to 1966, the 494th Bombardment Wing, directing aerial refueling and bombardment squadrons;

Whereas, in 1965, the 3630th Flying Training Wing was activated and in 1966 began providing pilot training to German Air Force students;

Whereas, in 1968, Sheppard Air Force Base became the epicenter for field training in the aircraft maintenance training pipeline, carried on today by the 982d Training Group, who deliver more than 35,000 trained students each year;

Whereas the 3630th Flying Training Wing became the 80th Flying Training Wing, expanding its student radius in 1973 to Iran, El Salvador, Ecuador, Saudi Arabia, and other nations under the security assistance program;

Whereas, in 1973, Sheppard Air Force Base held the honor of serving as a reception point for Operation Homecoming, welcoming home Vietnam prisoners of war after years of captivity;

Whereas, in 1981, at Sheppard Air Force Base, the 80th Flying Training Wing began the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program with 11 other partner nations (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, and the United Kingdom), providing the partner nations with several domains of pilot training;

Whereas, on July 1, 1993, Sheppard Air Force Base became the home of all aircraft

maintenance training when the Sheppard Training Center became the 82nd Training Wing;

Whereas, in 2016, the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program added Romania as its 14th partner and was extended through 2026;

Whereas the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program remains the world's only internationally manned and managed flying training program;

Whereas, since 1981, the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program has delivered more than 7,800 combat pilots for its 14 partner nations in support of NATO;

Whereas the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program trains 50 percent of all United States Air Force fighter pilots and is the sole source of fighter pilots for the partner nations of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway;

Whereas the 80th Flying Training Wing launches 50,000 sorties per year and is recognized as the busiest joint-use airfield in the Air Force;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2019, Sheppard Air Force Base created \$4,600,000,000 in economic impact and served as the region's largest employer, accounting for 1 in 8 jobs in Wichita County;

Whereas the 82nd Training Wing, stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base, graduates more than 60,000 officer and enlisted students each year;

Whereas the 82nd Training Wing is the largest technical training wing in the United States Air Force, teaching 6,000 students on a daily basis across the globe; and

Whereas, over the course of 80 years, Sheppard Air Force Base has delivered more than 7,000,000 trained Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and international partners and pilots to support military interoperability around the world: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate commemorates the 80th anniversary of the opening of Sheppard Air Force Base and the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program.

## SENATE RESOLUTION 425—RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING FREEDOM OF SPEECH, THOUGHT, AND EXPRESSION AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. ERNST, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. CRUZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 425

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech";

Whereas, in *Healy v. James*, 408 U.S. 169 (1972), the Supreme Court of the United States held that the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States applies in full force on the campuses of public colleges and universities;

Whereas, in *Widmar v. Vincent*, 454 U.S. 263 (1981), the Supreme Court of the United States observed that "the campus of a public university, at least for its students, possesses many of the characteristics of a public forum";

Whereas lower Federal courts have also held that the open, outdoor areas of the cam-

puses of public colleges and universities are public forums;

Whereas section 112(a)(2) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1011a(a)(2)) contains a sense of Congress noting that "an institution of higher education should facilitate the free and open exchange of ideas", "students should not be intimidated, harassed, discouraged from speaking out, or discriminated against", "students should be treated equally and fairly", and "nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to modify, change, or infringe upon any constitutionally protected religious liberty, freedom, expression, or association";

Whereas, despite the clarity of the applicable legal precedent and the vital importance of protecting public colleges in the United States as true "marketplaces of ideas", the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education has found that approximately 1 in 10 of the top colleges and universities in the United States quarantine student expression to so-called "free speech zones", and a survey of 466 schools found that almost 30 percent maintain severely restrictive speech codes that clearly and substantially prohibit constitutionally protected speech;

Whereas, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), "Speech codes adopted by government-financed state colleges and universities amount to government censorship, in violation of the Constitution. And the ACLU believes that all campuses should adhere to First Amendment principles because academic freedom is a bedrock of education in a free society.";

Whereas the University of Chicago, as part of its commitment "to free and open inquiry in all matters", issued a statement in which "it guarantees all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn", and more than 50 university administrations and faculty bodies have endorsed a version of the "Chicago Statement";

Whereas, in December 2014, the University of Hawaii at Hilo settled a lawsuit for \$50,000 after it was sued in Federal court for prohibiting students from protesting the National Security Agency unless those students were standing in the tiny, flood-prone free speech zone at the university;

Whereas, in July 2015, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, settled a lawsuit for \$35,000 after it was sued in Federal court for prohibiting a student from handing out flyers about animal abuse outside of the free speech zone at the university, comprising less than 0.01 percent of campus;

Whereas, in May 2016, a student-plaintiff settled her lawsuit against Blinn College in Texas for \$50,000 after administrators told her she needed "special permission" to advocate for Second Amendment rights outside of the tiny free speech zone at the college;

Whereas, in February 2017, Georgia Gwinnett College agreed to modify its restrictive speech policies after two students sued in Federal court to challenge a requirement that students obtain prior authorization from administrators to engage in expressive activity within the limits of a tiny free speech zone, comprising less than 0.0015 percent of campus;

Whereas, in March 2017, Middlebury College students and protesters from the community prevented an invited speaker from giving his presentation and then attacked his car and assaulted a professor as the two attempted to leave, resulting in the professor suffering a concussion;

Whereas, in January 2018, Kellogg Community College in Michigan settled a lawsuit for \$55,000 for arresting two students for handing out copies of the Constitution of the United States while talking with their fellow students on a sidewalk;



Whereas, in June 2018, the University of Michigan agreed to change its restrictive speech code on the same day the United States Department of Justice filed a statement of interest in support of a lawsuit in Federal court challenging the constitutionality of the speech code of the university;

Whereas, in December 2018, the Los Angeles Community College District, a 9-campus community college district that includes Pierce College, settled a lawsuit for \$225,000 and changed its restrictive speech policies after it was sued in Federal court for prohibiting a Pierce College student from distributing Spanish-language copies of the Constitution of the United States on campus unless he stood in the free speech zone, which comprised approximately 0.003 percent of the total area of the 426 acres of the college;

Whereas, in December 2018, the University of California, Berkeley, home of the 1960s campus free speech movement, settled a lawsuit for \$70,000 and changed its restrictive policies after it was sued in Federal court for singling out one student group, apart from other student groups, with the imposition of stricter rules for inviting "high-profile" public speakers;

Whereas the States of Virginia, Missouri, Arizona, Kentucky, Colorado, Utah, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Dakota, and Iowa have passed legislation prohibiting public colleges and universities from quarantining expressive activities on the open outdoor areas of campuses to misleadingly labeled free speech zones; and

Whereas free speech zones have been used to restrict political speech from all parts of the political spectrum and have thus inhibited the free exchange of ideas at campuses across the country: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that free speech zones and restrictive speech codes are inherently at odds with the freedom of speech guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

(2) recognizes that institutions of higher education should facilitate and recommit themselves to protecting the free and open exchange of ideas;

(3) recognizes that freedom of expression and freedom of speech are sacred ideals of the United States that must be vigorously safeguarded in a world increasingly hostile to democracy;

(4) encourages the Secretary of Education to promote policies that foster spirited debate, academic freedom, intellectual curiosity, and viewpoint diversity on the campuses of public colleges and universities; and

(5) encourages the Attorney General to defend and protect the First Amendment across public colleges and universities.

#### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3863. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3864. Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3865. Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted an amendment intended

to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3866. Mr. BROWN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2792, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

#### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3863. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

#### SEC. \_\_\_\_ REAUTHORIZATION OF SBIR AND STTR PROGRAMS.

(a) SBIR.—Section 9(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(m)) is amended by striking "September 30, 2022" and inserting "September 30, 2027".

(b) STTR.—Section 9(n)(1)(A) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 638(n)(1)(A)) is amended by striking "2022" and inserting "2027".

SA 3864. Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle E of title V, add the following:

#### SEC. 5 \_\_\_\_ PILOT PROGRAM ON ACTIVITIES UNDER THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR A REDUCTION IN SUICIDE AMONG VETERANS.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing the module described in subsection (b) and the services described in subsection (c) as part of the Transition Assistance Program for members of the Armed Forces participating in the Transition Assistance Program as a means of reducing the incidence of suicide among veterans.

(b) MODULE.—The module described in this subsection is a three-hour module under the Transition Assistance Program for each member of the Armed Forces participating in the pilot program that includes the following:

(1) An in-person meeting between the cohort of the member and a social worker or mental health provider in which the social worker or mental health provider—

(A) counsels the cohort on specific potential risks confronting members after discharge or release from the Armed Forces, including loss of community or a support system, isolation from family, friends, or society, identity crisis in the transition from military to civilian life, vulnerability viewed as a weakness, need for empathy, self-medication and addiction, importance of sleep and exercise, homelessness, and reasons why veterans attempt and complete suicide;

(B) in coordination with the inTransition program of the Department of Defense, counsels members of the cohort who have been diagnosed with physical, psychological, or neurological issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, adverse childhood experiences, depression, and bipolar disorder, on—

(i) the potential risks for such members from such issues after discharge or release; and

(ii) the resources and treatment options afforded to members for such issues through the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and non-profit organizations;

(C) counsels the cohort about the resources afforded to victims of military sexual trauma through the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(D) counsels the cohort about the manner in which members might experience grief during the transition from military to civilian life, and the resources afforded to them for grieving through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) In coordination with the Solid Start program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the provision to each cohort member of contact information for a counseling or other appropriate facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs in the locality in which such member intends to reside after discharge or release.

(3) The submittal by cohort members to the Department of Veterans Affairs (including both the Veterans Health Administration and the Veterans Benefits Administration) of their medical records in connection with service in the Armed Forces, whether or not such members intend to file a claim with the Department for benefits with respect to any service-connected disability.

(c) SERVICES.—The services described in this subsection in connection with the Transition Assistance Program for each member of the Armed Forces participating in the pilot program are the following:

(1) Not later than 90 days after the discharge or release of the member from the Armed Forces, a contact of the member by a social worker or behavioral health coordinator from the Department of Veterans Affairs to schedule a follow-up appointment with a social worker or behavioral health provider at the facility applicable to the member under subsection (b)(2) to occur not later than 90 days after such contact.

(2) During the appointment scheduled pursuant to paragraph (1)—

(A) an assessment of the member to determine the experiences of the member with events during service in the Armed Forces that could lead, whether individually or cumulatively, to physical, psychological, or neurological issues, including issues described in subsection (b)(1)(B); and

(B) the development of a medical treatment plan for the member, including treatment for issues identified pursuant to the assessment under subparagraph (A).

(d) LOCATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The pilot program shall be carried out at not fewer than 10 Transition Assistance Centers of the Department of Defense that serve not fewer than 300 members of the Armed Forces annually that are jointly selected by the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for purposes of the pilot program.

(2) MEMBERS SERVED.—The centers selected under paragraph (1) shall, to the extent practicable, be centers that, whether individually or in aggregate, serve all the Armed Forces and both the regular and reserve components of the Armed Forces.

(e) SELECTION AND COMMENCEMENT.—The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of

Veterans Affairs shall jointly select the locations of the pilot program under subsection (d)(1) and commence carrying out activities under the pilot program by not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(f) DURATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The duration of the pilot program shall be five years.

(2) CONTINUATION.—If the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs recommend in the report under subsection (g) that the pilot program be extended beyond the date otherwise provided by paragraph (1), the Secretaries may jointly continue the pilot program for such period beyond such date as the Secretaries jointly consider appropriate.

(g) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter during the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly submit to Congress a report on the activities under the pilot program.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A description of the members of the Armed Forces who participated in the pilot program during the 180-day period ending on the date of such report, disaggregated by the following:

- (i) Sex.
- (ii) Branch of the Armed Forces in which served.
- (iii) Diagnosis of, or other symptoms consistent with, military sexual trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, or bipolar disorder in connection with service in the Armed Forces.

(B) A description of the activities under the pilot program during such period.

(C) An assessment of the benefits of the activities under the pilot program during such period to veterans and family members of veterans.

(D) An assessment of whether the activities under the pilot program as of the date of such report have reduced the incidence of suicide among members who participated in the pilot program within one year of discharge or release from the Armed Forces.

(E) Such recommendations as the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs jointly consider appropriate regarding expansion of the pilot program, extension of the pilot program, or both.

(h) TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DEFINED.—In this section, the term “Transition Assistance Program” means the program of assistance and other transitional services carried out pursuant to section 1144 of title 10, United States Code.

**SA 3865.** Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle G of title X, add the following:

**SEC. 1064. NOTIFICATIONS AND REPORTS REGARDING REPORTED CASES OF BURN PIT EXPOSURE.**

(a) QUARTERLY NOTIFICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On a quarterly basis, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to

the appropriate congressional committees a report on each reported case of burn pit exposure by a covered veteran reported during the previous quarter.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to each reported case of burn pit exposure of a covered veteran included in the report, the following:

(A) Notice of the case, including the medical facility at which the case was reported.

(B) Notice of, as available—

(i) the enrollment status of the covered veteran with respect to the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code;

(ii) a summary of all health care visits by the covered veteran at the medical facility at which the case was reported that are related to the case;

(iii) the demographics of the covered veteran, including age, sex, and race;

(iv) any non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care benefits that the covered veteran receives;

(v) the Armed Force in which the covered veteran served and the rank of the covered veteran;

(vi) the period in which the covered veteran served;

(vii) each location of an open burn pit from which the covered veteran was exposed to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes during such service;

(viii) the medical diagnoses of the covered veteran and the treatment provided to the veteran; and

(ix) whether the covered veteran is registered in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

(3) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the reports submitted under paragraph (1) do not include the identity of covered veterans or contain other personally identifiable data.

(b) ANNUAL REPORT ON CASES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of Defense, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report detailing the following:

(A) The total number of covered veterans.

(B) The total number of claims for disability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, approved and the total number denied by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to a covered veteran, and for each such denial, the rationale of the denial.

(C) A comprehensive list of—

(i) the conditions for which covered veterans seek treatment; and

(ii) the locations of the open burn pits from which the covered veterans were exposed to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes.

(D) Identification of any illnesses relating to exposure to open burn pits that formed the basis for the Secretary to award benefits, including entitlement to service connection or an increase in disability rating.

(E) The total number of covered veterans who died after seeking care for an illness relating to exposure to an open burn pit.

(F) Any updates or trends with respect to the information described in subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), (D), and (E) that the Secretary determines appropriate.

(2) MATTERS INCLUDED IN FIRST REPORT.—

The Secretary shall include in the first report under paragraph (1) information specified in subsection (a)(2) with respect to reported cases of burn pit exposure made during the period beginning January 1, 1990, and ending on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) INCLUSION OF INFORMATION AFTER DEATH AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION REGARDING OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY.—Section 201(a) of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(3) REPORTING OF INFORMATION AFTER DEATH.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall permit a survivor of a deceased veteran to report to the registry under paragraph (1) the exposure of the veteran to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by an open burn pit, even if such veteran was not included in the registry before their death.

“(4) INFORMATION REGARDING REGISTRY.—

“(A) NOTICE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that a medical professional of the Department of Veterans Affairs informs a veteran of the registry under paragraph (1) if the veteran presents at a medical facility of the Department for treatment that the veteran describes as being related to, or ancillary to, the exposure of the veteran to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits.

“(B) DISPLAY.—In making information public regarding the number of participants in the registry under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall display such numbers by both State and by congressional district.”.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing an assessment of the effectiveness of any memorandum of understanding or memorandum of agreement entered into by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to—

(1) the processing of reported cases of burn pit exposure; and

(2) the coordination of care and provision of health care relating to such cases at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and at non-Department facilities.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry” means the registry established by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

(2) The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

(B) The Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(3) The term “covered veteran” means a veteran who presents at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs (or in a non-Department facility pursuant to section 1703 or 1703A of title 38, United States Code) for treatment that the veteran describes as being related to, or ancillary to, the exposure of the veteran to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits at any time while serving in the Armed Forces.

(4) The term “open burn pit” has the meaning given that term in section 201(c) of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

(5) The term “reported case of burn pit exposure” means each instance in which a veteran presents at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs (or in a non-Department facility pursuant to section 1703 or 1703A of title 38, United States Code) for treatment that the veteran describes as

being related to, or ancillary to, the exposure of the veteran to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits at any time while serving in the Armed Forces.

**SA 3866.** Mr. BROWN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2792, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title X, add the following:

**SEC. 1013. STUDY AND REPORT ON HOUSING AND SERVICE NEEDS OF SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING AND INDIVIDUALS AT RISK FOR TRAFFICKING.**

(a) DEFINITIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In this section:

(A) SURVIVOR OF A SEVERE FORM OF TRAFFICKING.—The term “survivor of a severe form of trafficking” has the meaning given the term “victim of a severe form of trafficking” in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

(B) SURVIVOR OF TRAFFICKING.—The term “survivor of trafficking” has the meaning given the term “victim of trafficking” in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

(2) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (16), by striking “paragraph (9)” and inserting “paragraph (11)”; and

(B) in paragraph (17), by striking “paragraph (9) or (10)” and inserting “paragraph (11) or (12)”.  
(b) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (referred to in this section as the “Council”) shall conduct a study assessing the availability and accessibility of housing and services for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability who are—

(A) survivors of trafficking, including survivors of a severe form of trafficking; or

(B) at risk of being trafficked.

(2) COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study required under paragraph (1), the Council shall—

(A) coordinate with—

(i) the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking established pursuant to section 105 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103);

(ii) the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking;

(iii) the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;

(iv) the Secretary of Health and Human Services; and

(v) the Attorney General; and

(B) consult with—

(i) the National Advisory Committee on the Sex Trafficking of Children and Youth in the United States;

(ii) survivors of trafficking;

(iii) direct service providers, including—

(I) organizations serving runaway and homeless youth;

(II) organizations serving survivors of trafficking through community-based programs; and

(III) organizations providing housing services to survivors of trafficking; and

(iv) housing and homelessness assistance providers, including recipients of grants under—

(I) the continuum of care program authorized under subtitle C of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11381 et seq.); and

(II) the Emergency Solutions Grants Program authorized under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11371 et seq.).

(3) CONTENTS.—The study required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) with respect to the individuals described in such paragraph—

(i) an evaluation of formal assessments and outreach methods used to identify and assess the housing and service needs of such individuals, including outreach methods—

(I) to ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities; and

(II) to reach individuals with limited English proficiency;

(ii) a review of the availability and accessibility of homelessness or housing services for such individuals, including the family members of such individuals who are minors involved in foster care systems, that identifies the disability-related needs of such individuals, including the need for housing with accessibility features;

(iii) the effect of any policies and procedures of mainstream homelessness or housing services that facilitate or limit the availability of such services and accessibility for such individuals, including individuals who are involved in the legal system, as such services are in effect as of the date on which the study is initiated;

(iv) an identification of best practices in meeting the housing and service needs of such individuals; and

(v) an assessment of barriers to fair housing and housing discrimination against survivors of trafficking who are members of a protected class under the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.);

(B) an assessment of the ability of mainstream homelessness or housing services to meet the specialized needs of survivors of trafficking, including trauma responsive approaches specific to labor and sex trafficking survivors; and

(C) an evaluation of the effectiveness of, and infrastructure considerations for, housing and service-delivery models that are specific to survivors of trafficking, including survivors of severe forms of trafficking, including emergency rental assistance models.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Council shall—

(1) submit a report to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives that contains the information described in subsection (b)(3); and

(2) make the report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available.

**AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET**

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have 14 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is author-

ized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive session on nominations.

**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS**

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY**

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

**COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

**COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 3 p.m., to conduct a business meeting on nominations.

**COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing on pending legislation.

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE**

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 2 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION**

The Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary

is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC POLICY

The Subcommittee on Economic Policy of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Katherine Quinn, an American Institute of Physics Congressional Science Fellow through the American Association of Advancement of Science, who is serving in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following interns in my office be granted floor privileges until October 21, 2021: Dominique Rupp, Mason Witzke, and Francis Prosser.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PRISON CAMERA REFORM ACT OF 2021

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 2899 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2899) to require the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to address deficiencies and make necessary upgrades to the security camera and radio systems of the Bureau of Prisons to ensure the health and safety of employees and inmates.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2899) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2899

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Prison Camera Reform Act of 2021”.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Bureau of Prisons has 122 institutions located throughout the United States. The Bureau of Prisons employs nearly 38,000 employees and is responsible for more than 150,000 Federal inmates.

(2) Video footage from security camera systems and reliable communication over radio systems within Bureau of Prisons institutions are essential to protecting the health and safety of Bureau of Prisons employees and Federal inmates.

(3) Based on the experience of Bureau of Prisons correctional staff, the noticeable presence of functioning security cameras serves as an effective deterrent to criminal behavior and misconduct.

(4) Well-documented deficiencies of camera systems at Bureau of Prisons facilities have hindered investigators’ ability to substantiate allegations of serious misconduct by staff and inmates, including sexual and physical assaults, medical neglect, and introduction of contraband.

(5) In a 2016 report, the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Justice determined that “deficiencies within the BOP’s security camera system have affected the OIG’s ability to secure prosecutions of staff and inmates in BOP contraband introduction cases, and these same problems adversely impact the availability of critical evidence to support administrative or disciplinary action against staff and inmates”.

(6) Shortcomings in the land-mobile radio systems at Bureau of Prison facilities institutions impede the communication abilities of staff, slowing or preventing the response of correctional officers during an emergency or threat of attack, and jeopardizing the safety of both staff and Federal inmates.

#### SEC. 3. REQUIRED PLAN FOR REFORM OF BOP SECURITY CAMERA AND RADIO COVERAGE AND CAPABILITIES.

(a) PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall—

(1) evaluate the security camera, land-mobile radio (referred to in this Act as “LMR”), and public address (referred to in this Act as “PA”) systems in use by the Bureau of Prisons as of the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a plan for ensuring that all Bureau of Prisons correctional facilities have the security camera, LMR, and PA system coverage and capabilities necessary to—

(A) ensure the health and safety of staff and Federal inmates; and

(B) ensure the documentation and accessibility of video evidence that may pertain to misconduct by staff or inmates, negligent or abusive treatment of inmates, or criminal activity within correctional facilities.

(b) CONTENTS.—The plan required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) identify and include plans to address any deficiencies in the security camera system in use at Bureau of Prisons correctional facilities, including those related to—

(A) an insufficient number of cameras;

(B) inoperable or malfunctioning cameras;

(C) blind spots;

(D) poor quality video; and

(E) any other deficits in the security camera system;

(2) identify and include plans to adopt and maintain any security camera system upgrades needed to achieve the purposes described in subsection (a), including—

(A) conversion of all analog cameras to digital surveillance systems, with corresponding infrastructure and equipment upgrade requirements;

(B) upgrades to ensure the secure storage, logging, preservation, and accessibility of recordings such that the recordings are available to investigators or Courts at such time as may be reasonably required; and

(C) additional enterprise-wide camera system capabilities needed to enhance the safety and security of inmates and staff;

(3) identify and include plans to address any deficiencies in the LMR and PA systems in use at Bureau of Prisons correctional facilities, including those related to—

(A) an inadequate number of radios;

(B) inoperable, outdated, or malfunctioning LMR or PA systems;

(C) areas of Bureau of Prisons correctional facilities that lack adequate reception for radio operation;

(D) radios that lack an emergency notification feature (also known as a “man down” function), which automatically sends an alert and transmits the location of that radio in the event the wearer is in a prone position; and

(E) any other deficits in the LMR or PA systems;

(4) include an assessment of operational and logistical considerations in implementing the plan required under subsection (a), including—

(A) a prioritization of facilities for needed upgrades, beginning with high security institutions;

(B) the personnel and training necessary to implement the changes; and

(C) ongoing repair and maintenance requirements; and

(5) include a 3-year strategic plan and cost projection for implementing the changes and upgrades to the security camera, LMR, and PA systems identified under paragraphs (1) through (4).

(c) IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which the plan is submitted under subsection (a)(2), and subject to appropriations, the Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall complete implementation of the submitted plan.

(d) ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS.—Beginning 1 year after the date on which the plan is submitted under subsection (a)(2), and each year thereafter until the end of the 3-year period described in subsection (c), the Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report on the progress of the implementation of the submitted plan.

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, October 21; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Lin nomination, as provided under the previous order; further, that if the Lin nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. SMITH. For the information of Senators, the first rollcall vote of the day will be at approximately 10:30 a.m.

## ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators Tuberville, Marshall, and Hoeven. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Alabama.

## BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, you know, I think Americans must look at what is happening up here in Washington, DC, and think that the Democrats look like squirrels dodging cars in traffic. This is Biden's America, one where the party in power is throwing policy spaghetti at the wall in hopes that one of their harebrained ideas will stick.

It would be almost funny if our country wasn't staring down multiple problems as a result of the Biden administration's policy failures. And it is time the Democrats faced the facts. But after 10 months of President Biden running the country, how are ordinary Americans doing?

Let's just take a look. Take the border crisis: a complete, predictable, self-inflicted disaster.

On his first day in office, President Biden made the radical decision to open our borders by undoing many successful policies put in place by the Trump administration. They were working, and we changed them. You can draw a straight line from those ill-advised policy decisions to where we are as we speak.

Two million illegal immigrants will have been apprehended by the end of this year, and those are just the ones that we caught. Oddly enough, this is one issue that the mainstream media and conservative media agree on.

Here are a few recent headlines. From CNN: "12,000 migrants have been waiting in makeshift camps under the Del Rio bridge in Texas." That is from CNN.

And this from the Daily Caller: "Migrants Illegally Crossing U.S.-Mexico Border Thank"—they thank—President "[Biden's] Administration."

Do those headlines sound like the southwest border is under control?

Here is another headline for you. In a remarkable about-face, the Biden administration announced that it would reimplement the Trump-era Remain in Mexico policy after doing away with it on election day. They are going to reinstate it only because of a Federal judge. It is clear President Biden could have prevented this border crisis if he had not been focused on playing politics from his first day in office.

This is Biden's America.

How about the fact that President Biden didn't listen to the best military advice his top commanders gave him when it came to withdrawing troops in Afghanistan? America's best experts—

GEN Mark Milley, GEN Frank McKenzie, and GEN Scott Miller—all advised the President to keep 2,500 troops in Afghanistan to remain stable. Basically, at the end of the day, this was a State Department and President's decision.

Instead, the President's strategy turned into billions in American equipment handed over to the Taliban; our most valuable airfield, Bagram—maybe one of the most valuable in the world—abandoned in dead of the night; Americans left behind in enemy lines that are still there; and a complete abandonment of our allies in Afghanistan. What a disaster.

President Biden was more concerned about a good September 11 headline than a great strategy, more concerned about his press than saving American lives. The President's withdrawal will continue to be a stain on his legacy. Joe Biden created the worst American military foreign policy disaster in recent history, and the United States will be haunted by this decision for many years to come.

Another fact about this is Biden's America: President Biden's policies have undercut economic growth and derailed rapid recovery that was taking place under the Trump administration. And this was even during a pandemic.

Now prices are skyrocketing, businesses can't find people to work, and the United States is facing an unprecedented disruption in the supply chain. And this administration didn't know it was coming.

Incredibly, the White House and its defenders continue to say that all of these deeply concerning realities are due to the fact that President Biden has been so successful in his economic policy. They are using the "everything is so bad because President Biden is doing so good" argument. Where in the world are they getting that from?

This month, the President's own Chief of Staff promoted the idea that inflation is only a "high-class problem," the 1 percent. Where has this guy been hiding? Try telling that to the middle-class families in Alabama who are seeing hard-earned money cover less at the grocery store and at the pump.

The fact is, prices are rising—not just for the wealthy but for everybody. Consumer prices are at the highest point in 13 years, and inflation is costing American taxpayers \$175 a month. Somebody is screwed up. Again, you can draw a straight line from the President's decisions to where we are now. It is what happens when you pay people to not rejoin the workforce, force vaccine mandates on workers, stifle growth with regulations, and waste trillions and trillions of dollars as our country attempts to recover from a pandemic.

And it will only get worse with this \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spend spree—not if when we raise taxes but when we raise taxes to pay for this socialist package. The American people aren't going to buy into it.

The fact is that this is Biden's America. His agenda has led to the border crisis, foreign policy disasters, and a financial strain on American families. This is Biden's America, where Democrats are focused on finger-pointing and scoring political points instead of paying attention to the cold, hard facts of their policy failures.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

## BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today with a warning for Kansans and all Americans that the inflation we are seeing, Bidenflation, as I call it, is here to stay so long as those on the left continue to jam through reckless tax-and-spend bills.

Unfortunately, the inflation we are seeing is a double whammy. You have less money to spend, and the things you want to buy cost more. It is hurting every hard-working American but none more than our seniors and young families living paycheck to paycheck. No, President Biden, inflation is not a problem of just the high class. Indeed, there is no equity in Bidenflation.

Make no mistake, inflation and all of its lingering effects rest squarely on the shoulders of President Biden's failed social policies. It is yet another crisis created by this administration.

Having personally lived through the seventies and eighties, I have seen inflation happen firsthand. I have seen it bring so many businesses down. And to put it in simpler terms, inflation is a vicious cycle, like a dog chasing its own tail and the tail is on fire. And, of course, the Biden administration has been throwing gasoline on this fire since the moment they took office.

Today's inflation crisis began with Joe Biden's boondoggle stimulus bill and the preceding labor shortages. For months now, we are seeing "Help Wanted" signs everywhere, from the small mom-and-pop shops on Main Street to big hotel chains and fast-food restaurants. Employers are struggling to fill the open jobs they have despite raising wages and offering return-to-work bonuses.

This labor shortage is having a rippling effect across our economy, from slowing down the supply and logistics chains to putting an unfair burden on employees who choose to show up. This ripple has turned into a tidal wave of inflation and now a full-blown tsunami.

But the storm waves don't stop there. The cost of living has increased as a result of production delays caused by labor shortages. Higher costs at home, such as the cost of gasoline, vehicles, groceries, and energy costs caused workers to go on strike asking for higher wages just to make ends meet.

Folks, I have got news for you: Wages never keep up with inflation. All this, in turn, drives up the cost of goods and services even more. You get the point.

Inflation is a vicious cycle. This is the dog chasing its own tail.

But Bidenflation doesn't stop there now. Why? Because President Biden is throwing more gasoline on the fire with his unconstitutional vaccine mandate. I, too, have seen this firsthand. Just last week, I was in Kansas to meet with union members who are facing the difficult choice of keeping their jobs or getting the COVID vaccine.

These folks aren't just mad; they are panicked. And it is literally job or jab for them. In fact, the unions I spoke with estimate they will lose 30 to 50 percent of their workforce due to Joe Biden's vaccine mandate. This will make both our supply chain shortages as well as inflation even worse.

Mr. President, while I support the COVID vaccine and encourage folks to talk to their doctor about whether to get it, there is no doubt that President Biden's vaccination decree is an all-out assault on our private businesses, our civil liberties, and our entire constitutional system of limited government.

And it is a slap in the face to so many people who stood on the frontlines of the COVID battle last year and never stopped working: nurses, doctors, first responders, and those union workers I met with last week. Trust me, I have heard loud and clear these few weeks from Kansans about what they want, and it is not an unconstitutional vaccine mandate. It is not the socialism that is born out of trillions of dollars' worth of spending and taxing that has led to reckless inflation, hampered our economy, and killed our jobs.

The question is, Do Americans want Big Government socialism or do we want economic freedom and prosperity? Kansans agree that if you want strong roads, bridges, high-speed internet, good schools, and a strong military, we need a strong economy. That should be our focus right now, not continuing down this administration's socialist economic policies.

Pre-COVID, we had the greatest economy in my lifetime. That came about because we lowered people's taxes; we lowered regulations; and we lowered energy prices. We need smart, targeted investments, not radical spending that leaves the country at a disadvantage.

Unfortunately, in the meantime, everyone better buckle up and grab your wallets. Bidenflation is here to stay as long as this administration continues its reckless taxing, reckless borrowing, and reckless spending agenda.

#### 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, before I wrap up, I want to voice my support for Kansas City's bid to serve as host city for the 2026 FIFA World Cup prior to tomorrow's highly anticipated venue visit by FIFA representatives.

Kansas is home to some of the most devoted, fanatic soccer fans in the world that are ready to cheer on Team

USA, and what better place to do it than in America's heartland. The Kansas City community, alongside Sporting KC, has shown unwavering commitment to make this dream a reality, and Kansas City is no stranger to hosting major sporting events, from the Big 12 Men's Basketball Conference Championships, NCAA March Madness, and plans to host the NFL Football Draft in 2023.

We have great, fan-friendly facilities and something for everyone in the family to do. We have the lodging, public transportation, shopping and dining options needed to make the 2026 World Cup a great success. The FIFA World Cup is the largest and most prestigious single-sport event in the world, and there is no better place for it to be held than Kansas City.

Thank you.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the harmful impacts that President Biden's policies are having on the global supply chain and consumer energy prices.

Americans today are facing the highest increase in costs for goods and services in over a decade, with inflation now more than 5 percent and rising. Similarly, our workforce participation rate is stagnant. There are still 4.3 million fewer workers today than there were in February of 2020. Nationally, there are more than 10 million job openings—more than in any other year.

Record high job openings, coupled with rapidly increasing consumer demand, is causing disruptions to global supply chains and further increasing costs, increasing inflation. Rather than working to spur economic growth, encourage workforce participation, and return our economy to growth, as we saw with the last administration, President Biden and the Democrats in Congress are focused on raising taxes and enacting harmful, job-killing policies.

A prime example of what I am talking about—harmful policies being pushed by the Biden administration—is the Green New Deal that will hinder domestic energy production and increase the expense for every American household.

Affordable and reliable energy is foundational to our economy, quality of life, and national security. Across the country and in my home State of North Dakota, we are seeing energy prices rise across the board. Drivers are paying more for fuel at the pump, and homes and businesses are prepared for record high heating costs as we go into the winter months.

Because the cost of energy is built into virtually every product we consume, we are seeing the inflationary pressures of higher prices on goods across the entire economy, all the way

to the dinner table. For an energy-rich nation such as ours, the situation we find ourselves in is unacceptable, and it is certainly avoidable.

In the first week of his administration, President Biden yanked the permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline and halted new oil and gas leases on Federal lands and offshore. President Biden's party has also called for new taxes and fees on American energy production.

In addition, the Biden administration is promoting foreign energy production as he stifles energy production here at home. He has allowed completion of Russia's Nord Stream 2 Pipeline while calling on Russia, Saudi Arabia, and other OPEC nations to increase more oil production. Think about that. At a time when he is holding back energy production in our country—oil production in our country, he is asking OPEC, Saudi Arabia, and Russia to increase oil? It defies common sense. Think about it.

If the Biden administration continues down this path, it will not only cause further increased prices for consumers, but it will undermine our energy independence and harm our national security by forcing reliance on foreign energy production.

It is time we recognized the fact that our country's vast oil, gas, and coal resources are a strategic national security and economic asset. As we have seen over the past decade, greater U.S. energy production has strengthened our national security and lowered energy prices for hard-working American families.

The fact is, we should be focused on increasing economic growth, encouraging workforce participation, and restoring our economy to its prepandemic highs. Support for our domestic energy production is a vital step to bringing down prices for consumers, and we need to do it.

With that, I yield the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:28 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 21, 2021, at 10 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nomination received by the Senate:

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JAMES C. O'BRIEN, OF NEBRASKA, TO BE HEAD OF THE OFFICE OF SANCTIONS COORDINATION, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR. (NEW POSITION)

#### CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate October 20, 2021:

##### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CATHERINE ELIZABETH LHAMON, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.